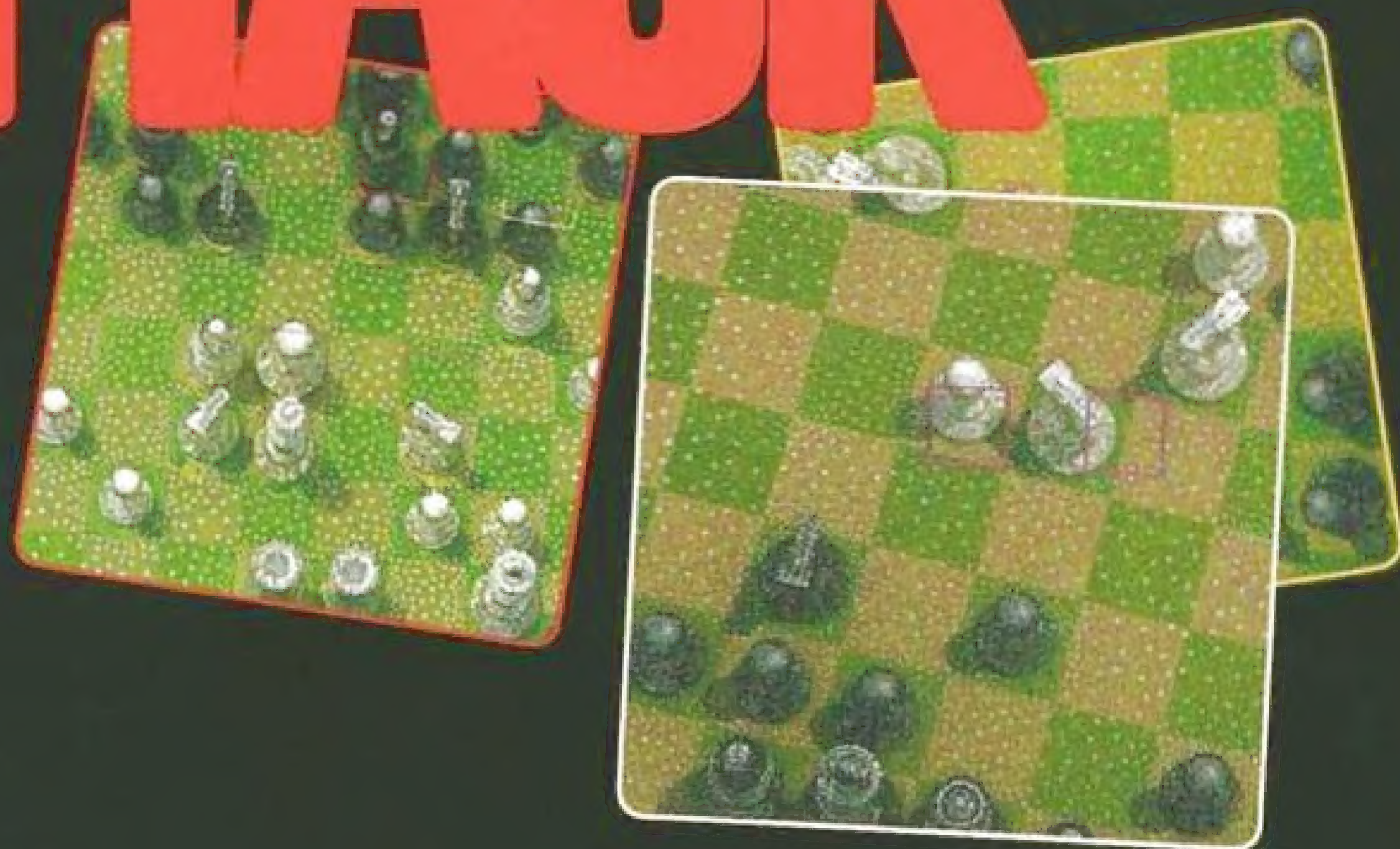


PREPARE TO ATTACK

GARY LANE



EVERYMAN CHESS



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EVERYMAN CHESS
www.everymanchess.com

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Introduction

“I used to attack because it was the only thing I knew. Now I attack because I know it works best.” – Garry Kasparov.

This book is aimed at helping players who want to refine their attacking technique and be able to understand how to go about creating the right conditions to ensure victory. In order to maximize our chances it is important to study the various ways an attack can be created and whether there are ways to ensure we move up to the next level.

I will endeavour to point out general considerations that can help an improving player and shortcuts that experienced opponents take for granted. It is not always easy to understand when to conduct an attack and this handicap can be due to a lack of confidence in the ability to assess a position. The examples I give throughout the book should be regarded as reminders of what to do right, and these ideas, if absorbed, are bound to improve your performance at the board.

I will also take time to gently remind everyone to constantly be aware of the practical side of the game. There

is no point playing brilliantly if you then throw a win away because you only have thirty seconds left on the clock to finish things off.

Introducing Some Ideas

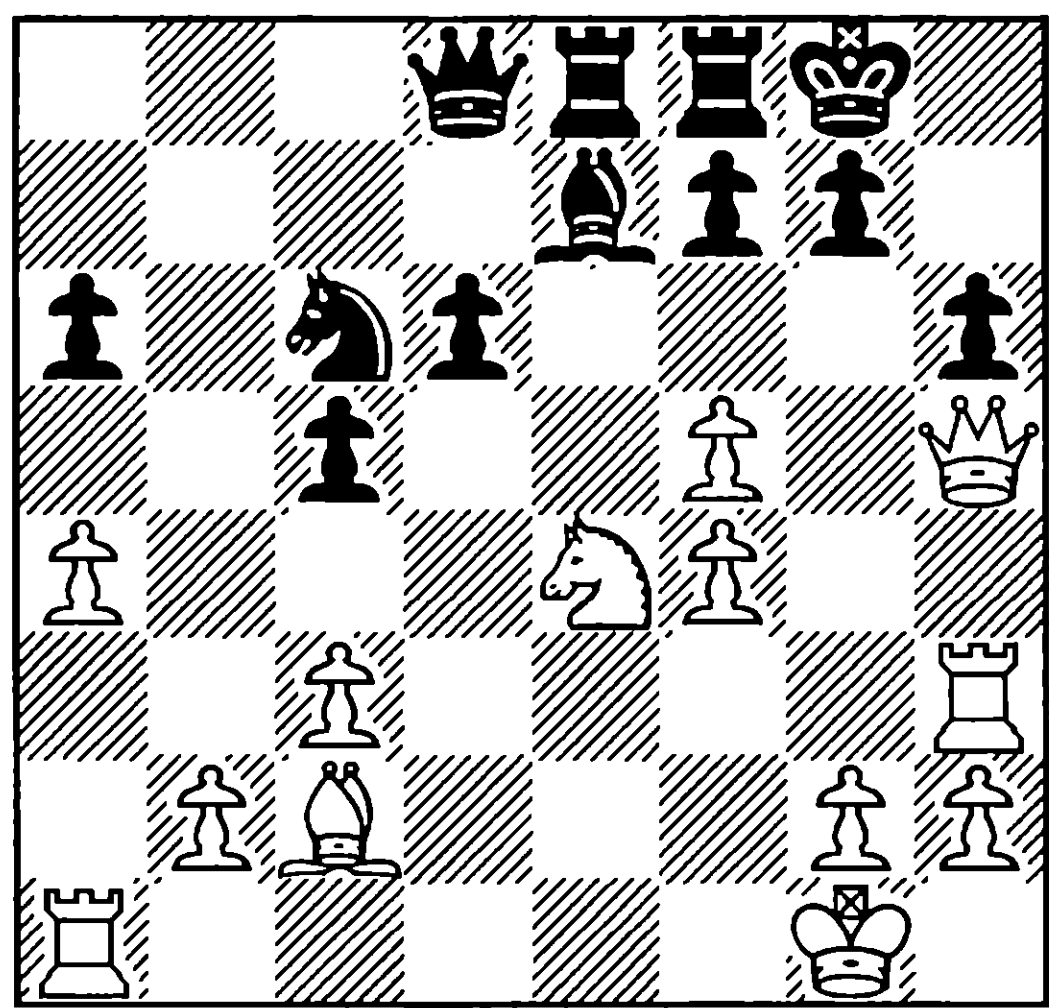
1. Count the Pieces

A simple way to try and correctly evaluate what is going on in a position is to count the pieces that are attacking compared to the number defending. This basic but effective idea was passed on to me and it makes a lot of sense when trying to work out a plan. This is because, even if you cannot fathom every tactical detail, it does help to boost your confidence in the knowledge that such positions tend to favour the one with the majority of pieces. I reckon just about all of us will acknowledge that the next position is in White's favour:

A.Shabalov-A.Stripunsky
US Championship,
St Louis 2010

This position looks good for White –

and so it should be because it is four pieces against two. The white queen, rook, bishop and knight are well placed, whereas Black has to count on the bishop and rook on f8 to defend the honour of the king. Not surprisingly the tactics favour White:



White to play

24 f6! ♗xf6

Of course 24...gxf6 allows 25 ♕xh6 and Black cannot prevent mate.

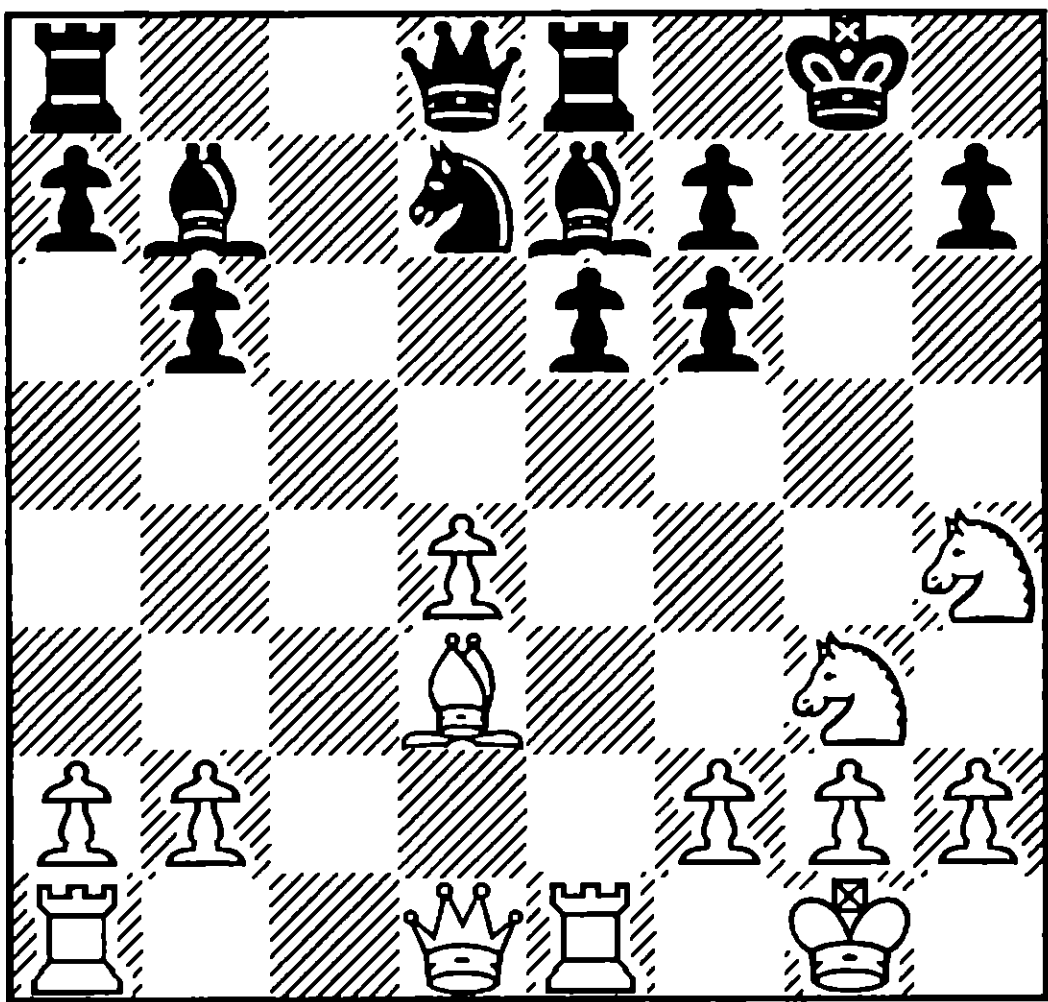
25 ♕f5! 1-0

A wonderful move which threatens checkmate on h7 after ♖xf6+ by revealing the bishop on c2. There is no hope for Black: 25...♗e7 26 ♖f6+ ♗xf6 27 ♕h7 mate, or 25...g6 26 ♖xf6+ ♔g7 27 ♖xe8+ and White wins a rook.

I think the knowledge that you will have more attacking options if you have a majority of pieces near the opposing king will be a positive motivation when trying to think up a plan. It is an influence on assessing a likely position that is easily taken on board be-

fore you have to consider any special factors. The next game looks splendid for White using the *count the pieces* policy and, sure enough, the advantage in having more pieces attacking than those defending is soon evident. My role in this book is to try and encourage you to create these kinds of positions and, if you do, going up to the next level will be a lot easier.

Zhao Zong Yuan-G.Canfell
Suncoast 1999



White to play

I would argue that this is a five vs. two scenario on the kingside. The white knights, bishop and queen are well placed for the attack, while the rook on e1 can join in the fun via e3. In contrast Black is relying on the dark-squared bishop and king's rook to aid the defence, while he just needs the luxury of another move to bring the knight back to f8. These positive factors, combined

with Black's exposed king, mean that tactical options multiply and there is a way to win quickly:

17 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7

The bishop has to be taken, otherwise Black is soon routed:

a) 17...♔g7 18 ♘hf5+ exf5 19 ♘xf5+ ♜h8 20 ♚h5 ♘f8 21 ♙g6+ ♔g8 22 ♙xf7 mate.

b) 17...♔h8 18 ♚h5 ♔g7 19 ♘hf5+ also leads to mate.

18 ♚h5+ ♔g8 19 ♘gf5

The threat is 20 ♚g4+ followed by 21 ♚g7 mate, so Black has little choice but to accept another sacrifice.

19...exf5

19...♙f8 runs into 20 ♖e3, again forcing mate.

20 ♖e3!

The move that Black missed – the rook is poised to swing across to the g3 or h3-squares with devastating consequences. Instead, the obvious 20 ♘xf5 fails to impress due to 20...♙f8 when Black will exchange the king's rook, so White has to bale out with a perpetual check after 21 ♚g4+ ♔h7 22 ♚h5+ ♔g8 23 ♚g4+ etc.

20...♙d6 21 ♖h3 1-0

White will move the knight to f3 or f5 and then force mate or win material.

It is impressive that all five of White's attacking pieces were directly involved in the attack.

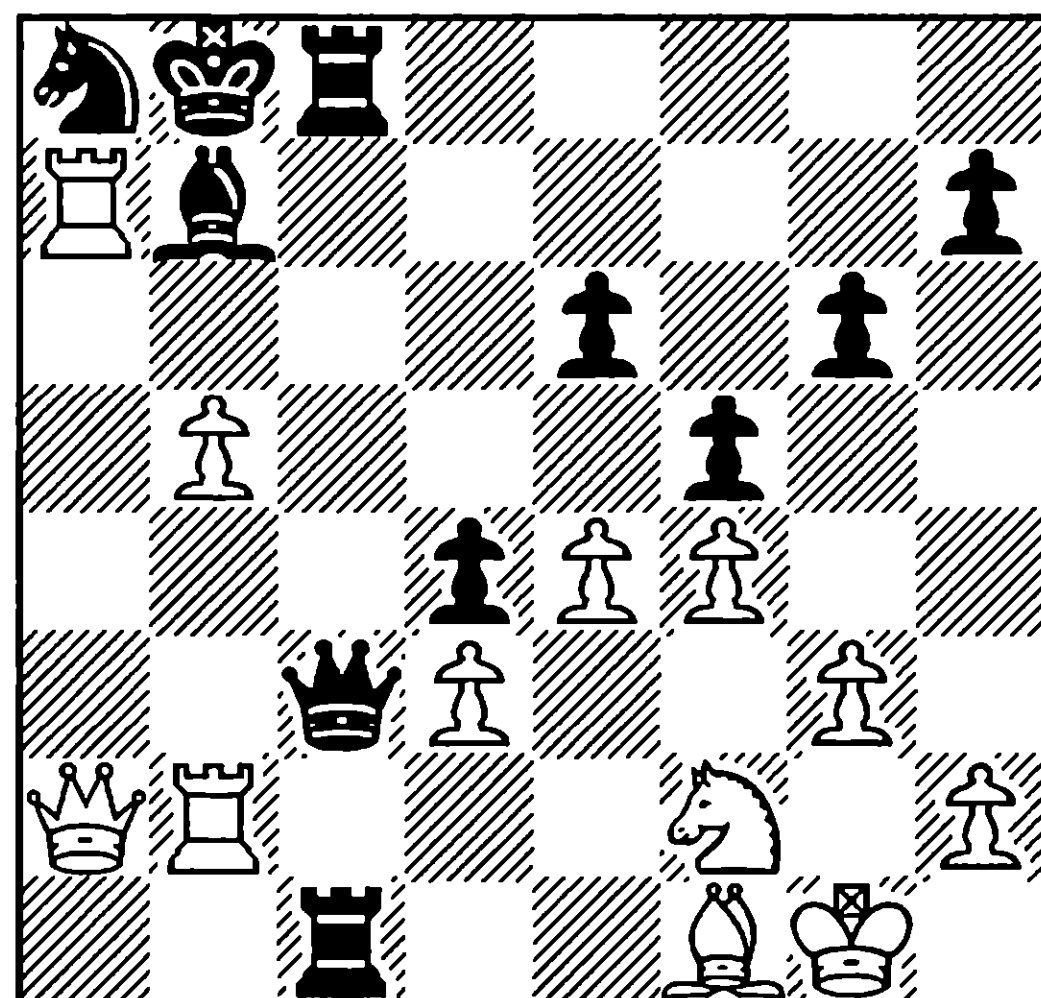
2. Predict-a-move

An attacking idea that helps make the difference is something I call *predict-a-*

move. So often overlooked by improving players, this is a proven method of winning more games. Quite simply you try to anticipate what your opponent is about to do next and then find a move that conceals a deadly trap if he just blindly carries on with his plan.

I have used the predict-a-move method for years, and it has helped me win numerous games. For example:

G.Lane-A.Ashby Torquay 1982

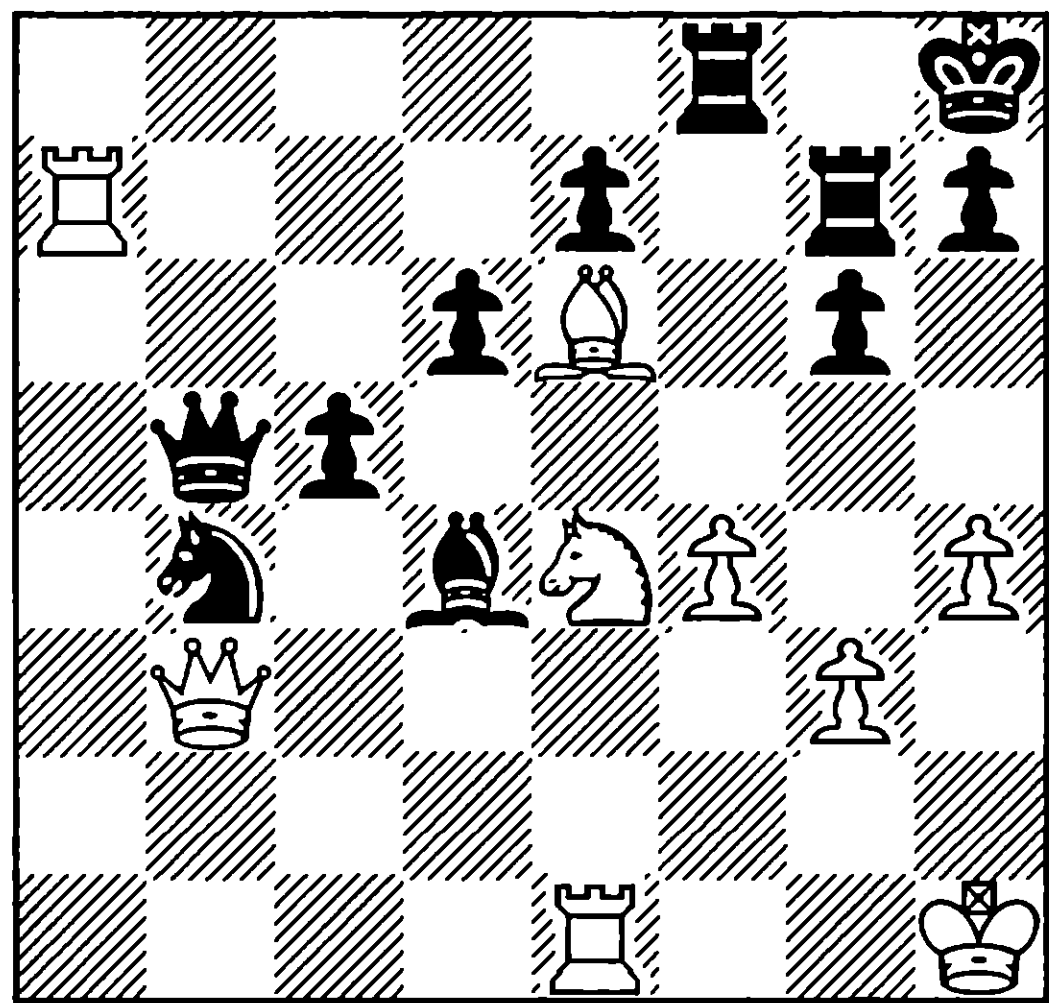


White to play

Black has just played 31...♚c3 and I was beginning to panic since the obvious idea is to play 32...♚e1 next move. However, I used this knowledge to think of a trap if he carried on with the plan and came up with **32 b6!**. My opponent loudly banged his queen on the board with the expected **32...♚e1**, which allowed me the neat finish **33 ♖xa8+ ♙xa8 34 ♚a7 mate**.

Predict-a-move is not only used for a mating combination, it is also an effective way to win material:

A.Sztern-G.Lane
Canberra 2001



Black to play

I am on top here but wanted to make sure of victory before I was dragged into time-trouble. My first thought was 28...c4 with a discovered attack on the a7-rook by the bishop on d4, but after 29 ♕xc4 my own queen would come under fire. So I played **28...♔c6**, pinning the knight on e4, and my opponent did the obvious thing and moved his king out the way with **29 ♔h2**, allowing **29...c4! 0-1**

3. Pattern Chess

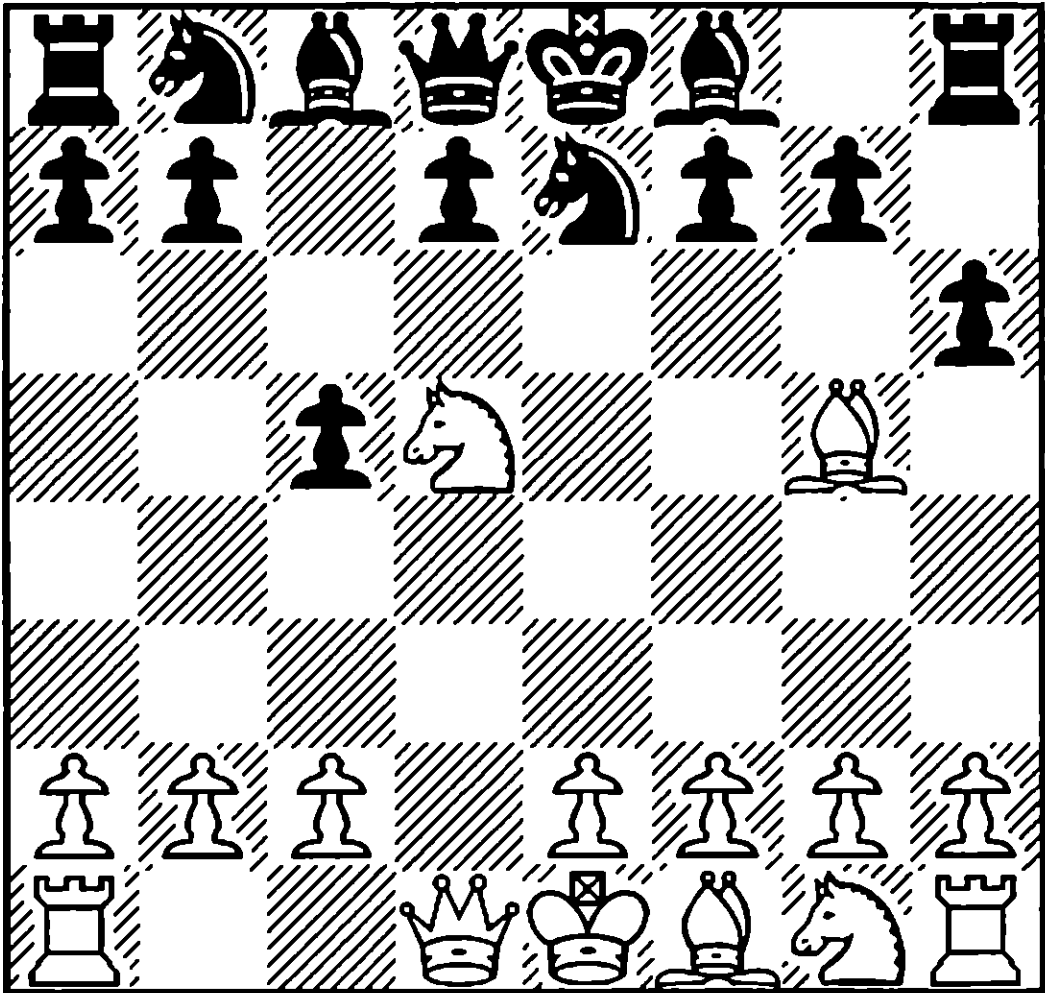
The opening is the place where people can go seriously wrong, so it makes sense to be prepared to attack at the earliest opportunity. There are times

when someone plays something odd in the opening and you don't know how to respond; all too frequently authors assume the reader will know what to do just because they take such things for granted. However, I will make a point of showing any tricks and traps available in the annotated games, to make it easier to catch opponents out in the future.

I think you should be on red alert if someone plays something completely different. This is the case in the following game where Black is an American renowned for his fine attacking style and innovation in the opening, but sometimes it can all go wrong:

Game 1
A.Yermolinsky-E.Tate
Western Open 2001
Old Benoni

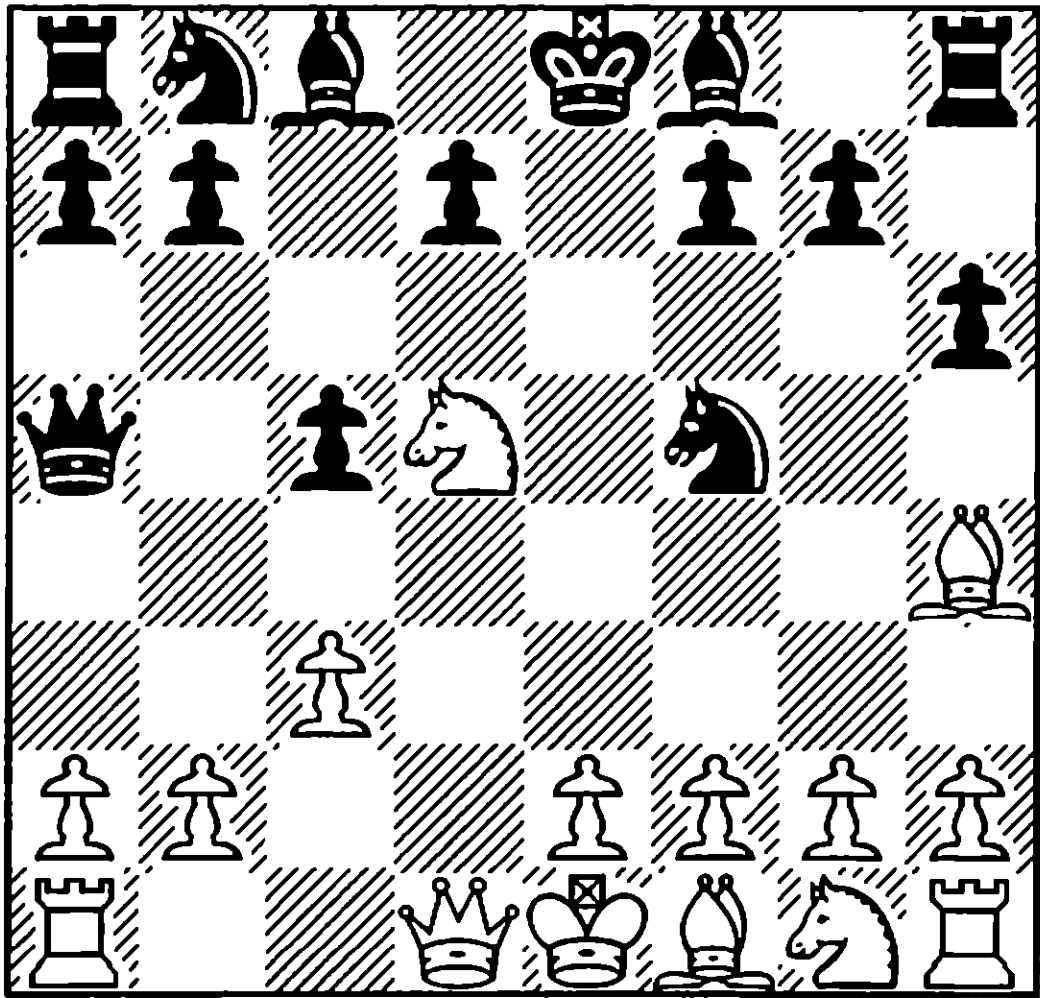
1 d4 c5 2 d5 e6 3 ♖c3 exd5 4 ♖xd5 ♖e7 5 ♗g5 h6!?



A slightly different move to the

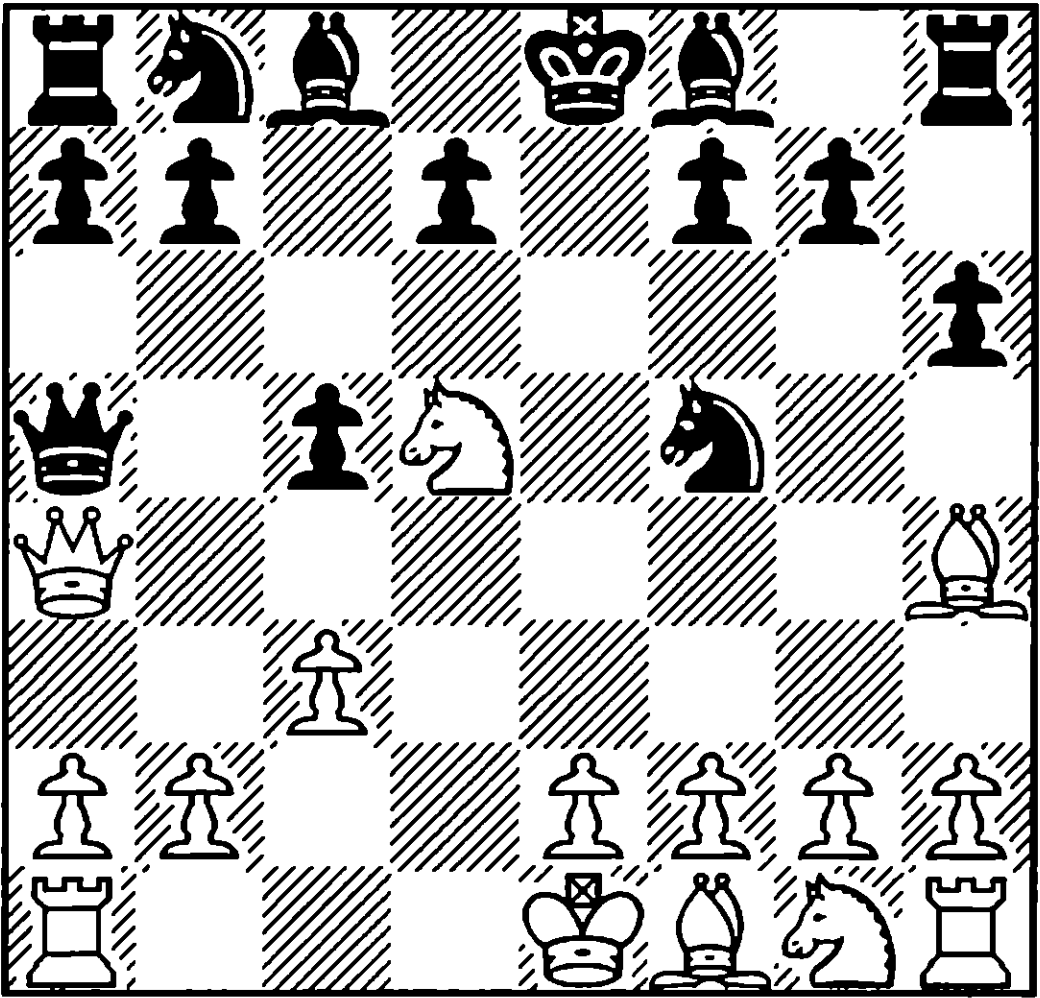
normal 5...♖a5+; Black has come up with the idea of forcing the bishop back and then trading pieces.

6 ♖h4 ♗a5+ 7 c3 ♘f5?



8 ♔a4!!

A clever and crushing reply. The threat of mate allows Yermolinsky to offer his queen for nothing, which is a reminder to be on the lookout for refutations of strange opening moves.



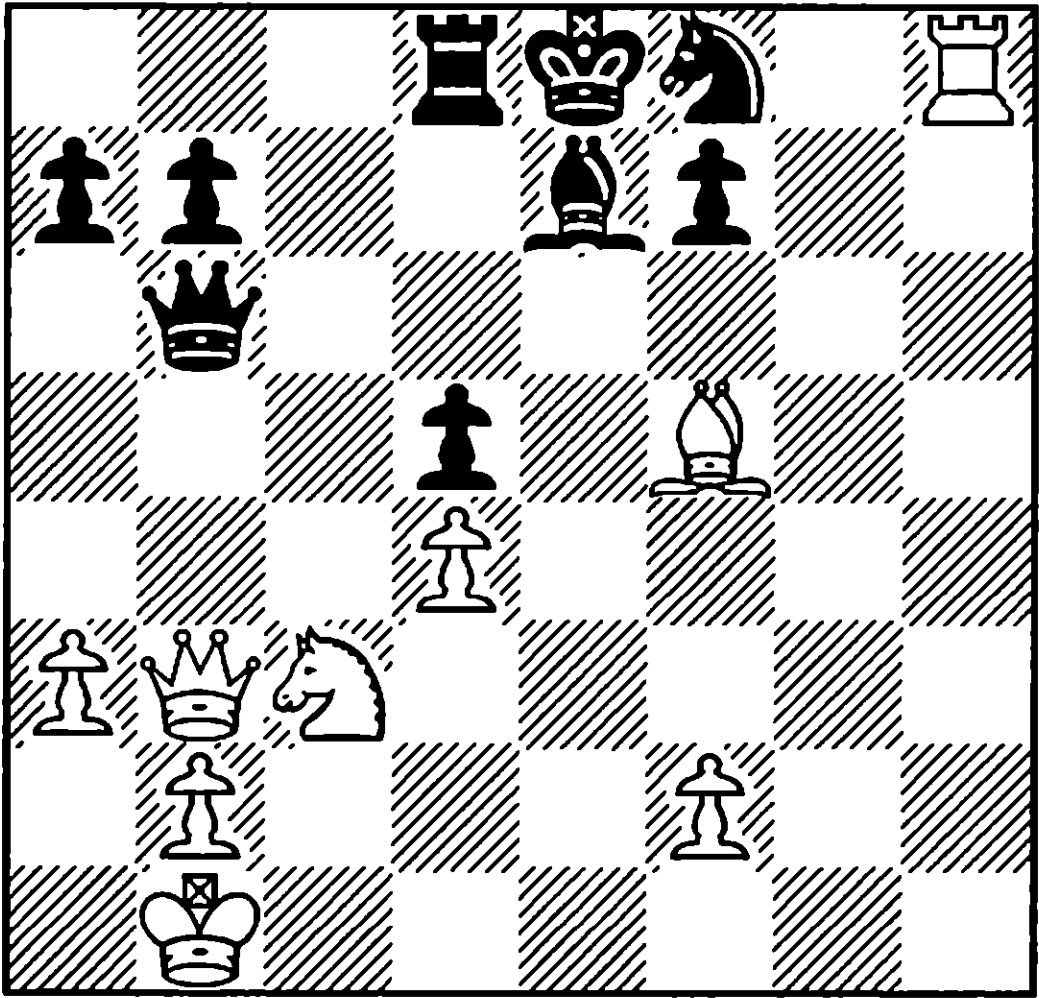
8...♗xa4

Emory Tate is a good sport and allows his opponent a fitting finale. There is not much choice about the final result because the queen has no sensible retreat and 8...♘c6 allows 8

♗xa5 ♘xa5 10 ♘c7 ♖c7 mate anyway.
9 ♘c7 mate

The most spectacular sacrifices tend to involve a queen – and remembering such attacking themes can make you look out for similar mating patterns in the future.

N.Legky-I.Efimov
Asti 1994



White to play

It might initially be quite daunting to try and spot a win here for White, but knowledge of the previous game should be a big help:

30 ♘xd5!

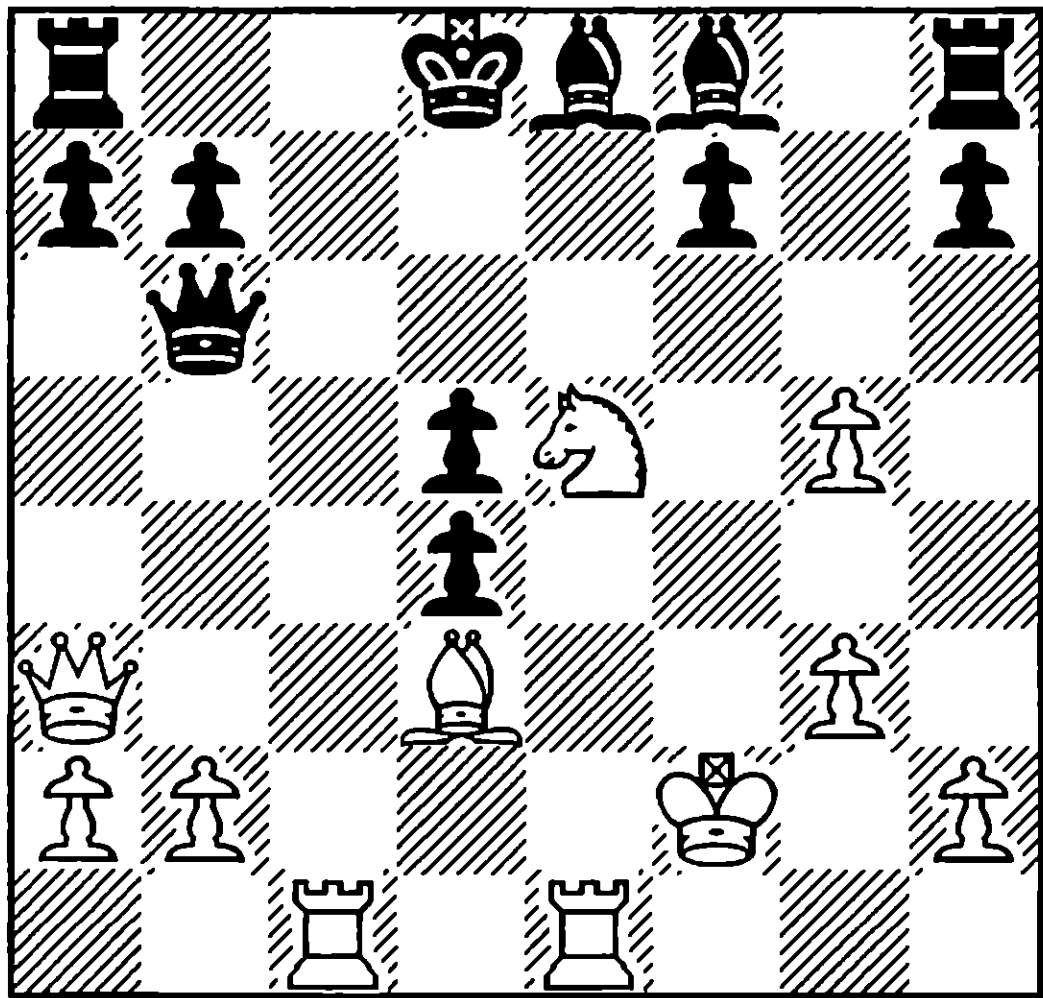
This idea should come quickly to mind if you are looking out for a mating combination with the knight and bishop.

30...♗a5 31 ♗b5+! 1-0

If we take it up to another level then

knowledge of the mating pattern can work wonders:

D.Solak-J.Kozamernik
Ljubljana 2003



White to play

23 ♔a4!

Yes, this should be more obvious by now; once again a mating net is set up.

23...h6??

Black clearly saw enough not to accept the sacrifice: 23...♙xa4?? 24 ♘xf7+ ♔d7 25 ♙f5+ ♔e6 26 ♙xe6+ gives White enough time to take the king's rook, winning easily; and 23...♔xb2?? fails to 24 ♖c2 ♙xa4 25 ♘xf7+ ♔d7 26 ♙f5 mate. But he failed to notice that 23 ♔a4 was actually threatening something, otherwise he would have played 23...♙e7!, preparing a safe square at e8 for the king.

24 ♔d7+! 1-0

Since 24...♙xd7 25 ♘xf7 is again mate.

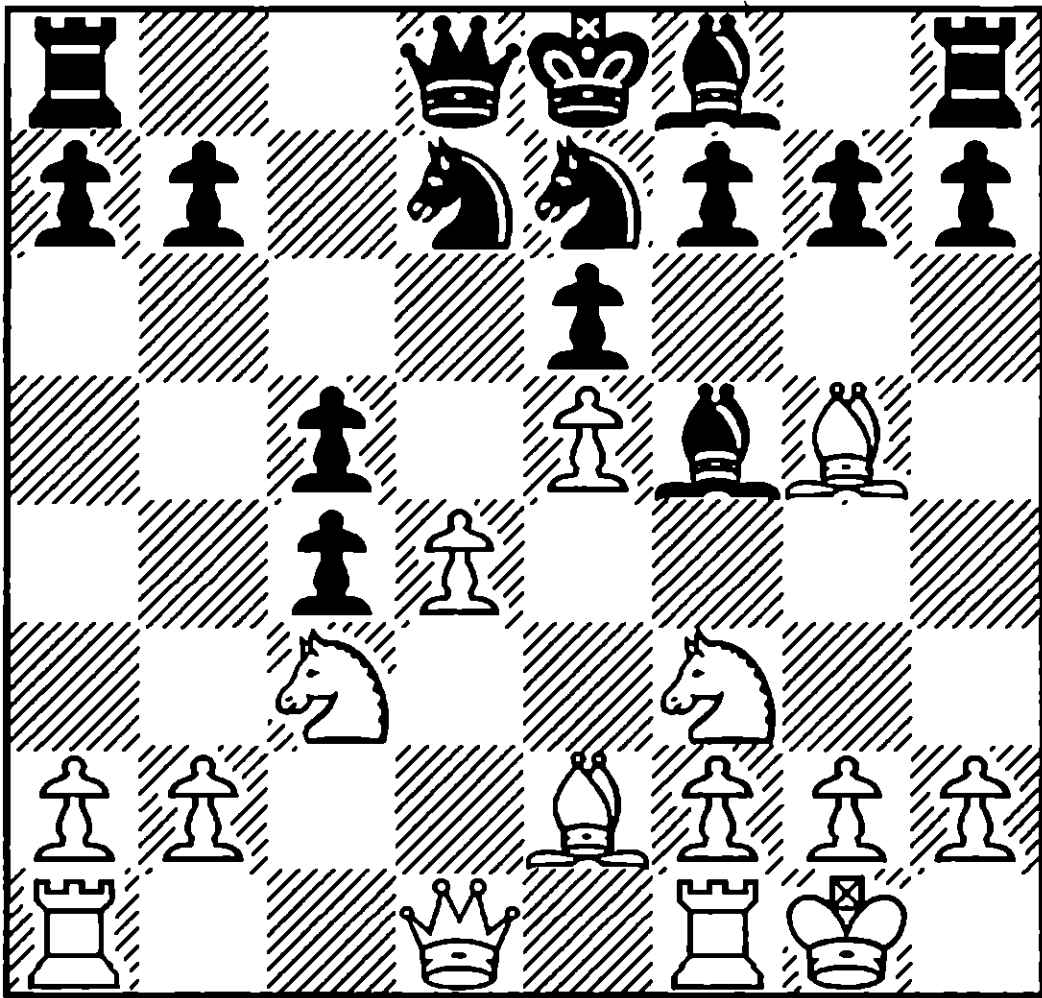
Here's a final reminder that watching out for such a mating pattern can improve your standard of play, even in slightly different circumstances:

Game 2
Z.Runic-D.Bosnjak
Sarajevo 2010
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5

This is known as the Advance Caro-Kann.

3...♙f5 4 ♘f3 e6 5 ♙e2 ♘d7 6 0-0 c5 7 c4 ♘e7 8 ♘c3 dxc4 9 ♙g5



9...♔b6 or 9...f6 are the normal moves in this position, but Black decided on an independent course:

9...h6? 10 ♘b5!

Surely such a move comes to mind a lot quicker by now?

10...♔b6

10...hxg5?? 11 ♘d6 mate would be truly embarrassing.

11 ♘d6+ ♔d8 12 dxc5 ♔xb2 13 ♙xe7+ ♙xe7 14 ♘xf5

14 ♖xf7 and 15 ♖xh8 is also good, but White has spotted a mating net.

14...exf5 15 ♖b1 1-0

Moving the queen allows 16 ♖xb7 and mate on d7.

How to Win Friends and Influence the Chessboard

“One should respect a defeated opponent!” – Alexander Khalifman.

Although I take a look at the role of psychology, of how it can influence decision making at the board and away from it, the emphasis is on the lighter side. Now that we expect to win many more games, I would expect a graceful response to questions from potential opponents. Always make them leave feeling that if they survive 25 moves in the next game that would be quite something. If they take an interest in your favourite chess opening, direct them towards a risky gambit and add knowledgeably that the resulting position with a two pawn deficit for them is ‘interesting’ and worthy of further study.

Just to be serious, all I really mean is be polite. After all Vishy Anand is such a gentleman that everyone wants to help him, to the point where rivals Carlsen, Kramnik and Kasparov phoned him on Skype to lend him support and analysis in his 2010 match World Championship match against Topalov.

What you should not do is to encourage people to beat you by being a

bad loser. Some people mutter their outrage at losing and stride off after the game without even bothering to help set up the pieces. This is not the right way to conduct yourself, especially as the consequence is that a long line of opponents will try even harder to beat you.

The Ultimate Reply to Any Onlooker

“These things are not conducive to high-class play!” – Bobby Fischer recalling an incident to interviewer James Burke in 1972 when an onlooker whispered a move in his ear during an American tournament.

I have seen all kinds of response to onlookers who misguidedly offer advice to stronger players than themselves when the players are analysing after a result. I have heard the master who kindly replied that the suggested move did have a lot going for it and he would have chosen it but for the loss of a queen. I think you should be polite, especially if you start getting the winning habit by attacking in more games.

The most devastating reply that I know of was recorded by the English master Amos Burn in a letter dated from 1889. He wrote:

“I once heard of Mr Schüll, one of the strongest players we ever had in the Liverpool Chess Club, but who has now for some years been living in Waterdown, Dacota. Mr Schüll was one

day taking lunch at the club when he observed, at a little distance, a rather weak player engaged in analysing a particularly fine game that he, Mr Schüll had played the day before. In the course of his analysis the weak player kept suggesting, as *improvements* on Schüll's play, inferior moves which probably would have lost the game off-hand. Mr Schüll stood it as long as he could, but finally he could endure no longer, and turning on the offender he inquired in accents stern 'Mr ---, did you ever see a monkey examining a watch?'"

I would only add that experienced players are usually more than happy to share views with players about a game, but a word of warning from my own experience: don't suggest a winning move while the game is still in progress.

Nothing Can Go Wrong Now

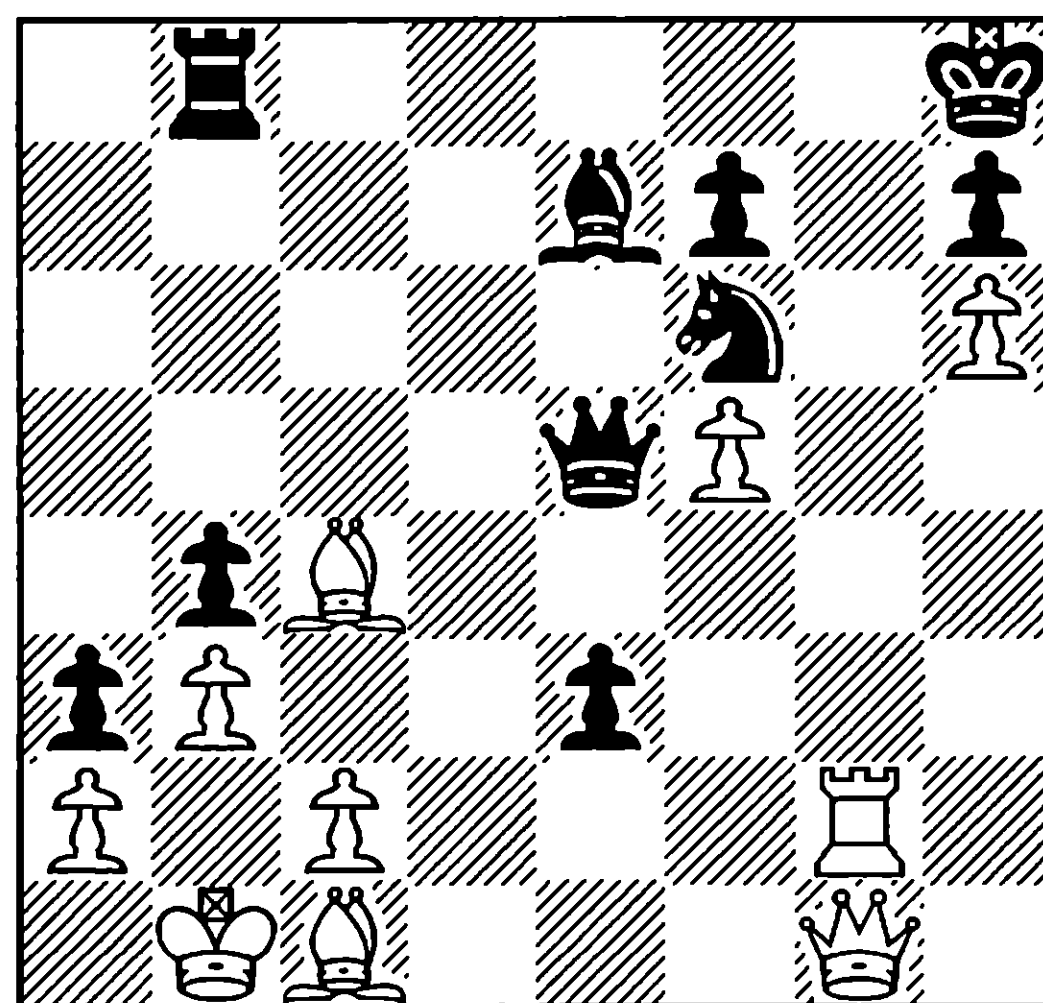
At the end I have added a chapter called *Tricks of the Trade*, giving guidelines on the practical side of chess and how to step up to a higher level. I discuss various issues, perhaps not directly linked to attacking, but which can alter the course of a game.

The number one problem for a lot of players is running out of time. I have met many people who played the game of their life, some even claim to have been unstoppable, but they still lost. There is no point honing your attacking skills only to allow your opponent off

the hook. The comments afterwards are normally of the kind: "I was a piece up, winning easily, and then I lost on time." It always sounds to me as though they are suggesting someone else should take the blame.

I will give some pointers on how to reduce the number of occasions in which you are fighting against the clock as well as the pieces on the board. It is clear that time-trouble can cause all sorts of problems, which can lead to the ruin of a game:

J. Benjamin-B. Gulko US Championship, Seattle 2000



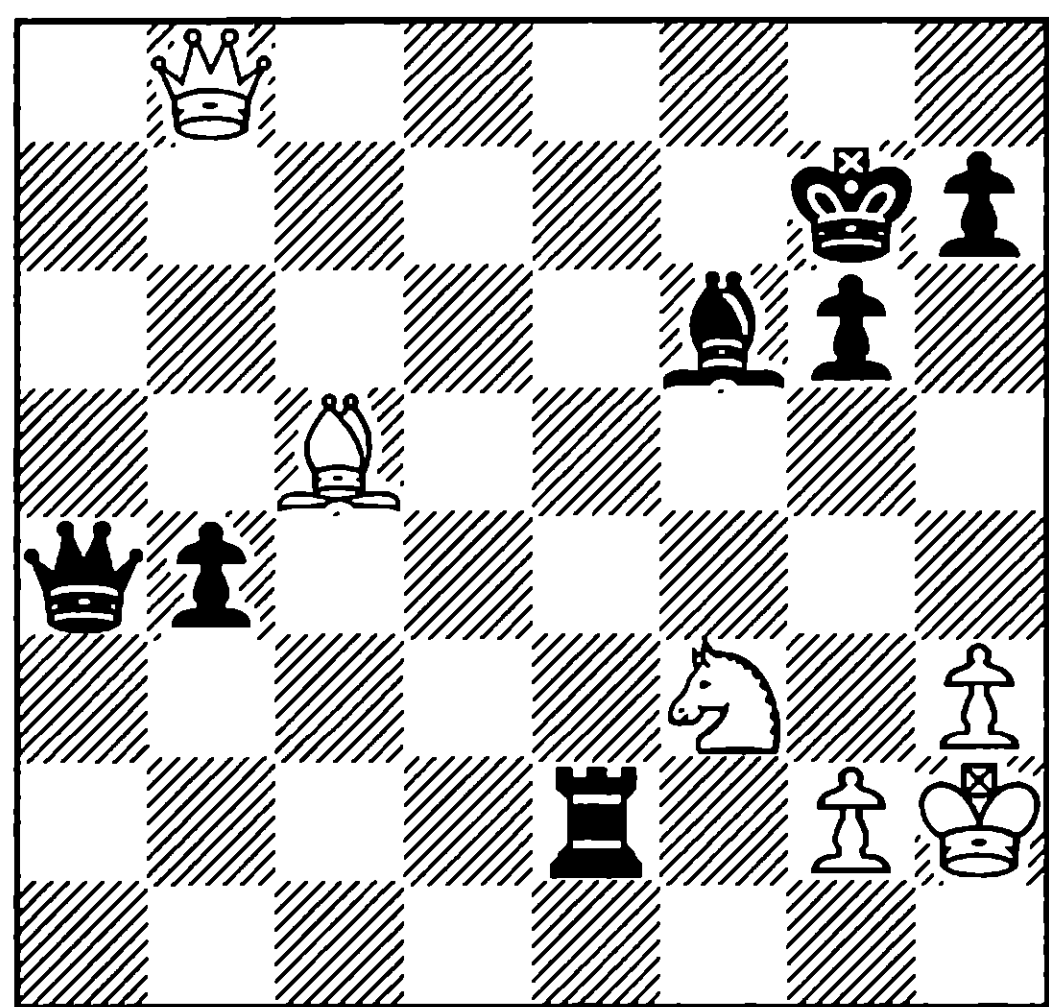
White to play

The former US Champion later recalled "In time pressure, I tried to weigh the consequences of 32 ♖xf7 (unclear) and 32 ♔xe3 ♘e4 (probably a draw). Suddenly I had a brainstorm."

32 ♖xe3?? ♔b2 mate

There are a lot of people who excel at blitz or rapid games but fail miserably when trying to play well in time-trouble. It is hardly surprising – there is more at risk when you have been toiling for around four hours and are on the verge of winning or losing over the space of a few minutes. Here is another reminder of how it can all go wrong:

B.Jones-N.Povah
British Championship,
Chester 1979



Black to play

A typical example where Black has worked hard for victory all the game and now only needs to complete one more move to reach the time control.

40...♔c6??

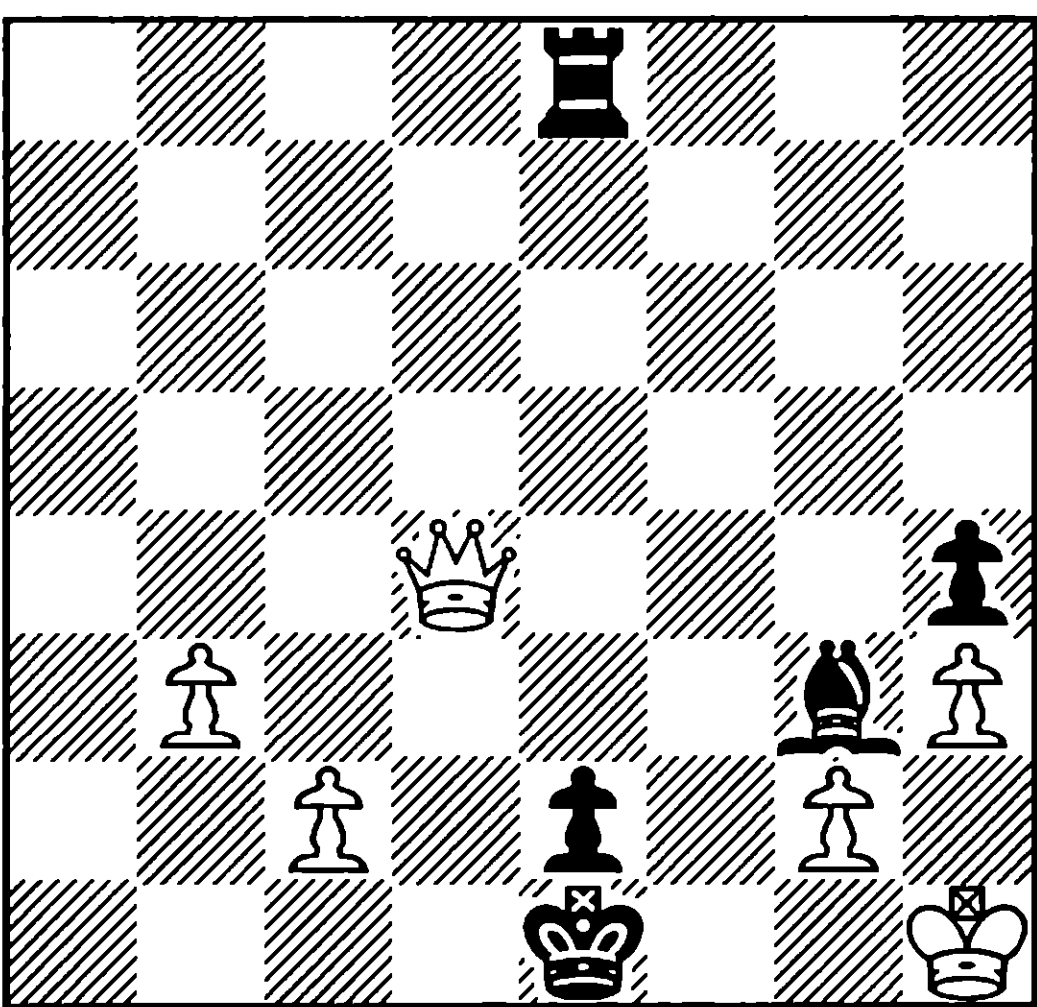
The lure of attacking the bishop and threatening ...♔xf3 proves too much for Black who can't resist one more trick. But he overlooked something:

41 ♕f8 mate

Draw!

How can a draw offer be part of the package for the attacking player? It sounds ludicrous but time and time again I have witnessed players reasonably offering a draw, only for their opponents to refuse and then go berserk. It might be a psychological trick but occasionally it does work.

A.Morozevich-K.Maslak
Russian Championship,
Moscow 2008

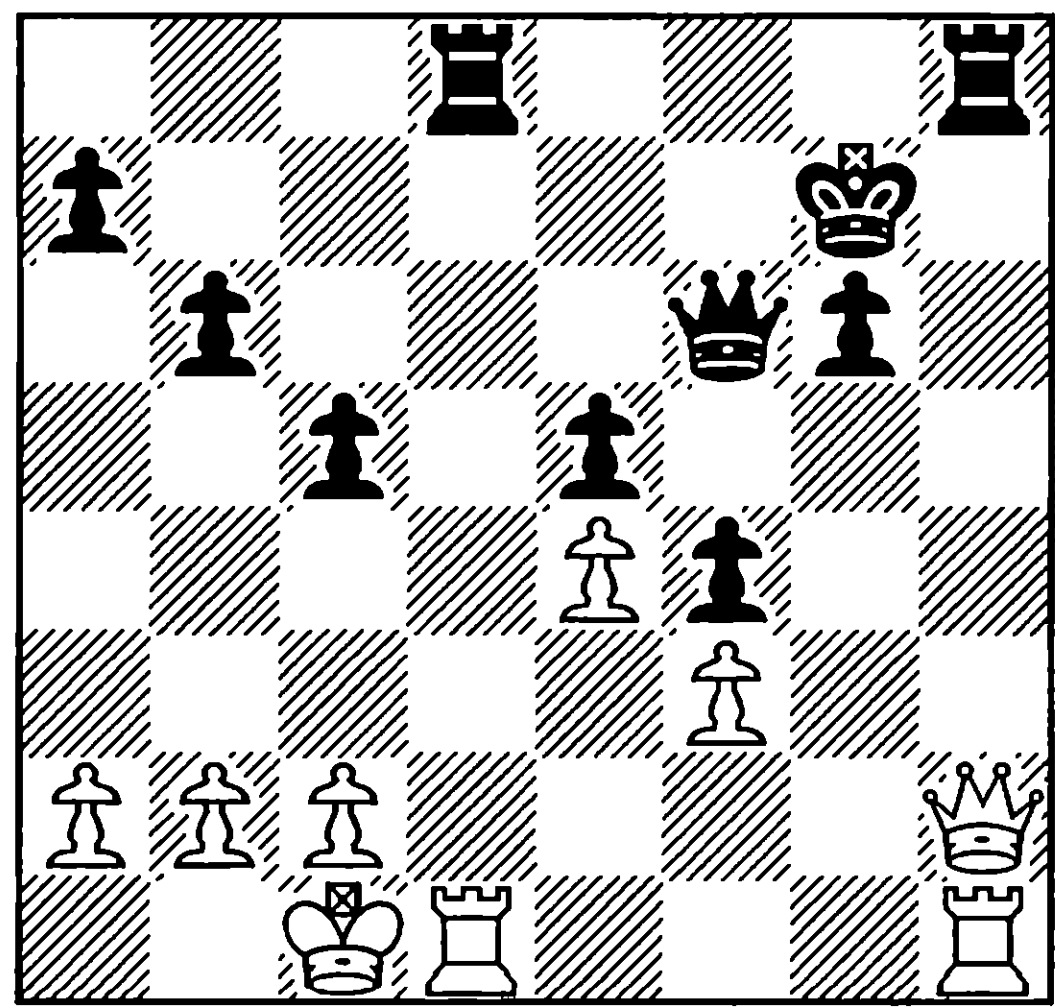


White to play

After giving a number of checks White played **69 ♕d4** and offered a draw. This makes sense because he has no realistic winning ambitions, and 69...♔f2 70 ♕a1+ ♔d2 71 ♕a5+ ♔xc2 72 ♕a2+ will end up in a draw eventually since the queen will keep checking. However, the psychological ploy worked: the draw was immediately rejected and Black quickly played the

blunder 69...♙f1?? allowing 70 ♔g1 mate.

The Exception



White to play

Although I am always advocating strong, attacking play with the emphasis on securing the win at all costs, I did

track down one game where, I have to admit, sportsmanship took over and is to be admired. The star American junior Stuart Rachels was playing Black in the Birmingham tournament in 1983 when his lowly rated opponent set up a big shock with the brilliant 24 ♖d7+!, plunging the youngster into despair: 24...♔g8 25 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 26 ♕xh8+ wins quickly, while 24...♖xd7 also leads to a forced loss after 25 ♕xh8+ ♔f7 26 ♖h7+ ♔e6 27 ♕e8+ ♕e7 (27...♖e7 28 ♕c6 mate) 28 ♕xg6+ ♕f6 29 ♕e8+ ♕e7 30 ♖h6 mate.

So why did White accompany the winning move with a draw offer? Because there can be exceptions in the pursuit of winning even against gifted juniors – especially when it turns out that White was Jim Rachels, his dad.

Chapter One

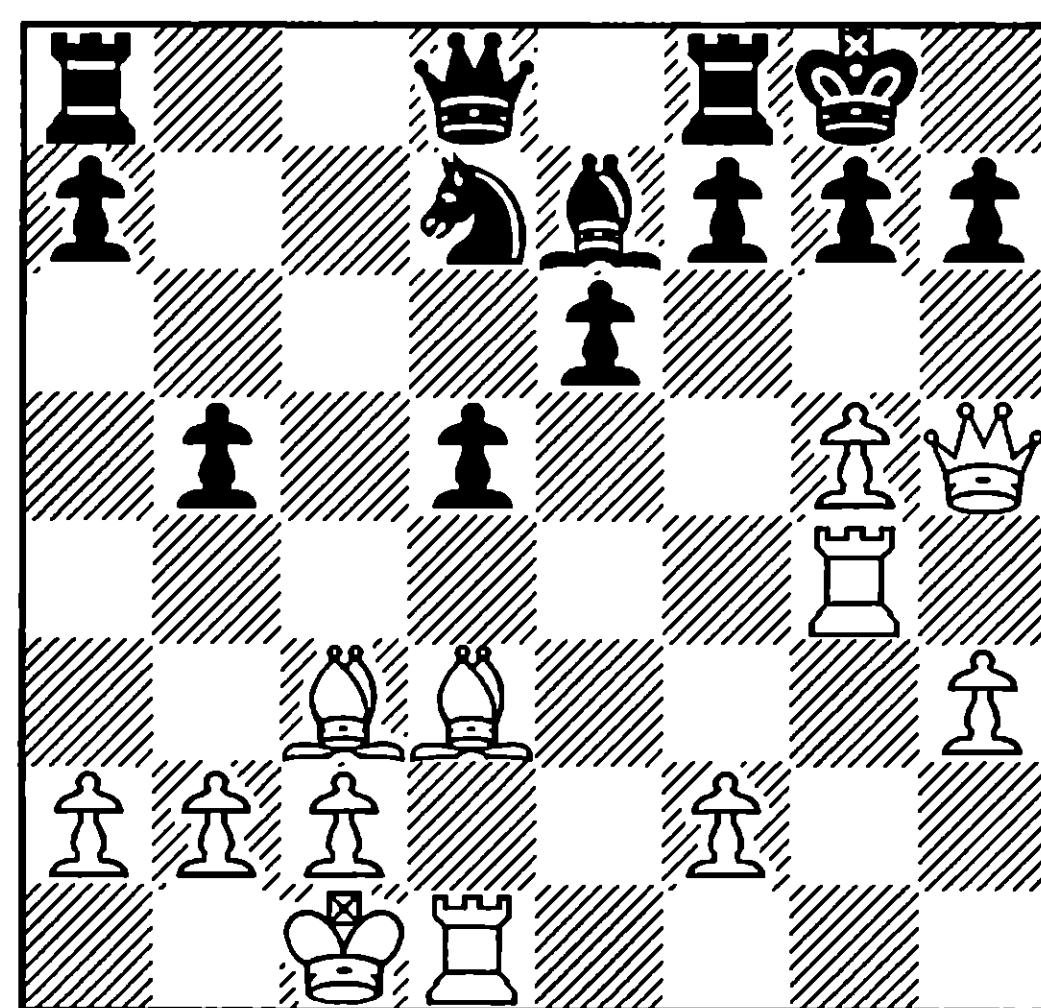
Count the Pieces

“When I play chess, I hardly ever calculate the play in detail. I rely very much on an intuitive sense which tells me what are the right moves to look for.” – legendary grandmaster Miguel Najdorf in *Chess Life*, 1962.

There are many aspects to creating an attack but a recurring theme that can earn success is to count the pieces. Yes, it is simplistic, but the more I play the more I observe that there’s more than a grain of truth in it. I first came across the idea when talking to the English grandmaster Julian Hodgson. He had once again won a brilliant, attacking game and had been swamped by questions on how he had managed to see so many moves ahead and was the sacrifice really sound? As we travelled around London after the game I put to him the same sort of line of enquiry. He shrugged his shoulders and said “I just counted the pieces”. I did wonder if I had misheard him but he said the same thing and added “look, I

was attacking his king with four pieces and he was defending with one so there has to be something.” I nodded wisely but it took me some time to realize what he explained so quickly can actually make a difference when trying to evaluate a position.

F.Kwiatkowski-S.Gregory
Hastings 2009/10



Black to play

A casual glance would confirm that

White is making good progress because the pair of bishops are targeting the black kingside, while the queen and rook are handily placed. In contrast Black has a rook and bishop on defensive duties, so four vs. two is just a quick way of acknowledging that White should have more options available. A more detailed appraisal of the position does of course indicate things are looking bright because of the threat of mate on h7. There followed:

18...g6

18...h6 allows White to swamp the black king by 19 gxh6 ♖f6 20 ♖h7+! ♔xh7 (or 20...♔h8 21 hxg7+ ♖xg7 22 ♖xg7 mate) 21 hxg7+ ♔g8 22 ♔h8 mate; while 18...f5 runs into 19 gxf6 ♖xf6 20 ♖xg7+! (the prettiest finish) 20...♔xg7 21 ♔xh7 mate.

19 ♔xh7+! 1-0

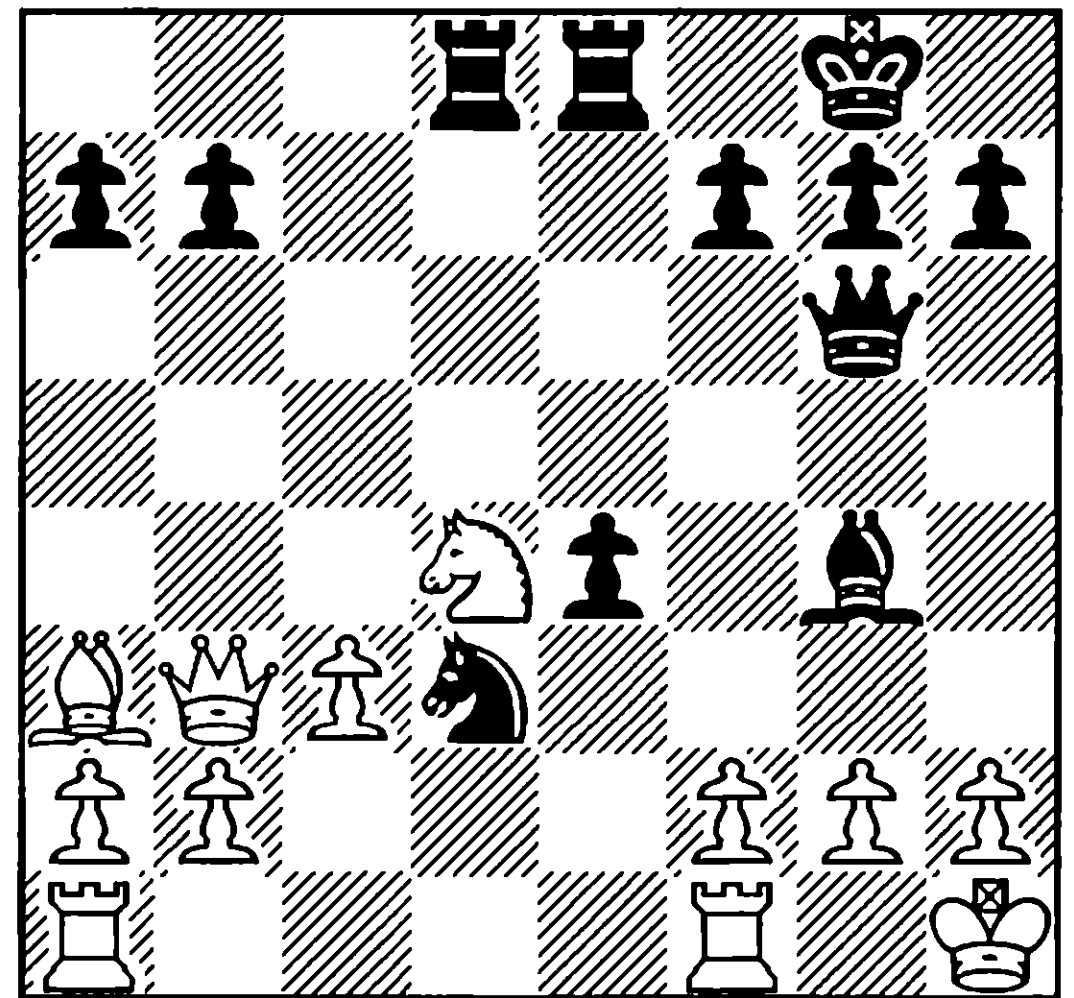
Black resigned in view of 19...♔xh7 20 ♖h4+ ♔g8 21 ♖h8 mate.

That all sounds very simple and I have to admit there is somewhat more to creating a successful attack. But the point is that knowing such a handy formula can make it easier to strive for such positions without having to analyse every line in your head. I believe that being aware of such a constant truth can help one go up to the next level. I have heard this sort of thing before described as *superior force conquers* but that never really struck me as being a golden rule. The more simplistic approach makes assessments of

potential attacks easier to appreciate.

Here is another example of how one can count the pieces to find out who is on top.

C.Juarez Flores-S.Lputian Manila Interzonal 1990



Black to play

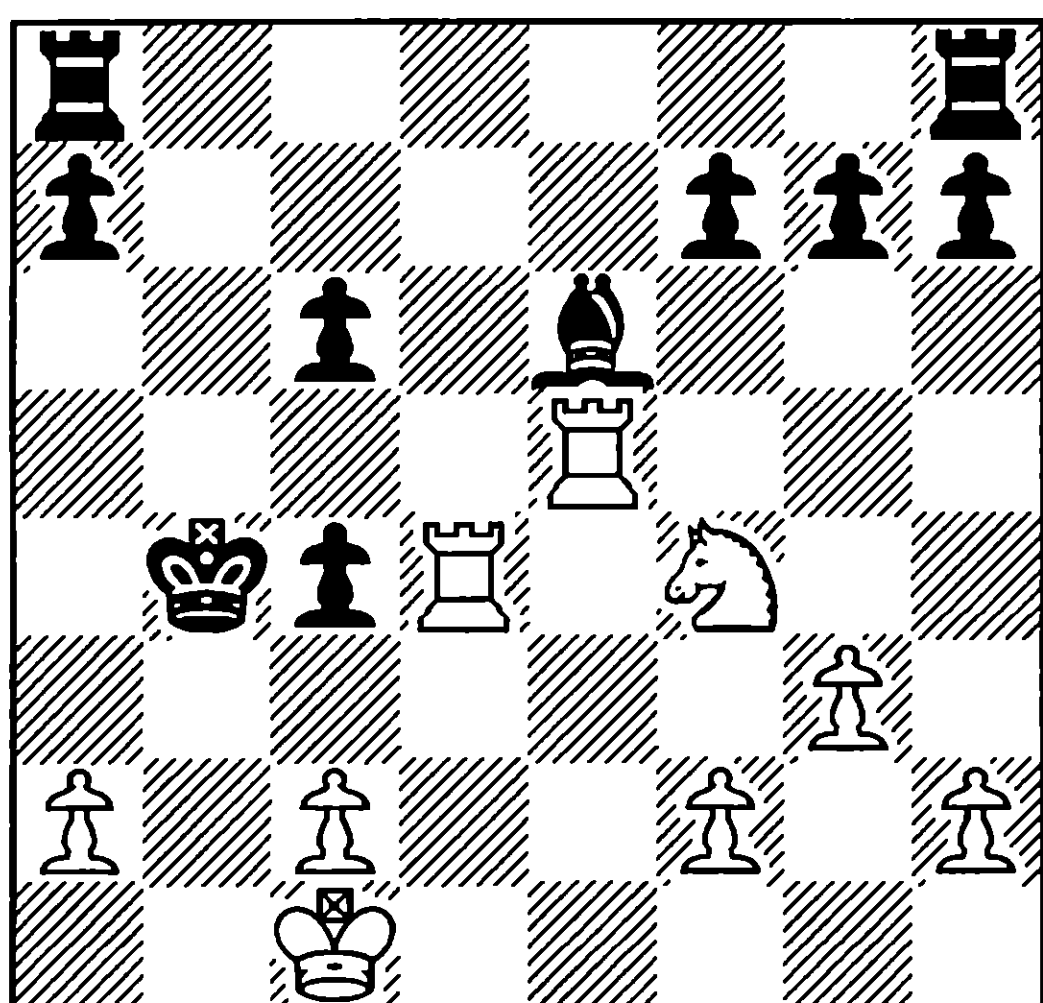
I once presented this position to various improving players and quite a few, independently, revealed later that the idea of *counting the pieces* did help them to solve the puzzle. Sure enough, it is three vs. one so Black should have more attacking chances. Black's queen, knight and bishop are well placed but the white rook on f1 is holding things together and you might argue that the knight on d4 is giving a helping hand.

22...♖xd4! 0-1

Black removes a defending piece and White suddenly resigns due to 23 cxd4 ♖f3! 24 gxf3 exf3 25 ♖g1 (otherwise ...♔g2+) 25...♗xf2 mate.

The formula can work in every stage of the game including endings. After all when the pieces start being exchanged it is sometimes easy to forget that attacking chances are still available:

G.Lane-J.Nunn Stroud 1980



White to play

The grandmaster playing Black had tried to avoid a likely draw by advancing his king up the board in the vague hope of putting off his junior opponent. It is true I did not know the ruse *count the pieces* at the time, but I clearly remember thinking that there had to be something good happening because *all* my pieces were within striking distance of the black king:

21 a3+!

I spotted that the black king was in a perilous situation but this pawn nudge really gives Black something to worry about. The ingredient as to why

such a combination works is clearly because I have managed to activate all my pieces, while the black king's stroll is a lone mission. Of course White could also play 21 ♖xe6 first, followed by 21...fxe6 22 a3+! etc.

21...♔xa3

The alternatives are no better: 21...♔c3 22 ♘e2 mate or 21...♔a4 22 ♘xe6 fxe6 23 ♖xc4+ ♔xa3 24 ♖a5 mate.

22 ♘xe6 ♔b4

What else? The obvious 22...fxe6 is met by 23 ♖xc4 a5 (to prevent ♖a5+) 24 ♖e3+ ♔a2 25 ♖a4 mate.

23 ♖c5 1-0

Black resigned as 23...fxe6 24 ♖dxc4+ ♔a3 25 ♖a5 is again mate.

Now that the basic idea has been presented, the next stage is to learn how to use the knowledge in future games. I think the best way to get the hang of it is to see how other players often marshal their forces to make sure they have a piece majority when attacking the king:

Game 3

N.Short-Ye Jiangchuan

Taiyuan 2004

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 ♔c7

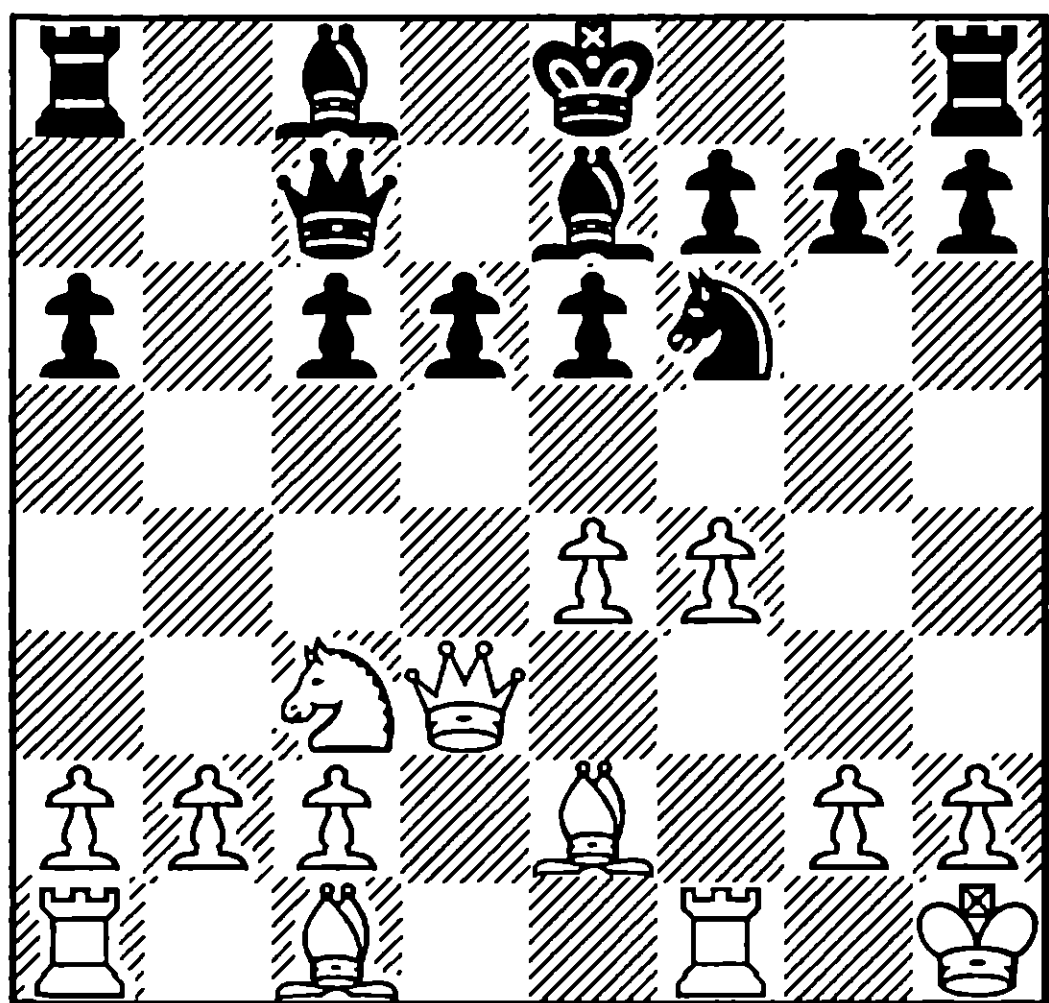
This is known as the Taimanov Variation, after the Russian grandmas-

ter Mark Taimanov. His name is also linked to various other openings because he analysed and published his findings during the 1960s and 70s when he was amongst the elite players in the world.

6 ♖e2 a6 7 0-0 ♞f6 8 ♔h1

This is the sort of mysterious move that can make people wonder how to emulate the stars. However, if you look at a lot of background games in this line then it should come as no surprise. The idea is that the king gets out of the way in preparation for f2-f4, when annoying checks or pins on the g1-a7 diagonal will now be avoided.

8...♙e7 9 f4 d6 10 ♞xc6 bxc6 11 ♚d3!?



The queen is ready to swing across to the kingside when required. The slight difference, compared to the standard manoeuvre ♚e1, is that White also has the option of the h3-square to carry on attacking in the middlegame. In other lines White tends to play ♙c1-e3 an early stage, so Short is taking advantage of the situation.

11...0-0 12 b3

White does not want to hurry to move the queen, so the queen's bishop needs to be developed and a fianchetto is appropriate in this case.

12...♙b7 13 ♙b2 c5 14 ♖ae1 ♖ae8

This is a good demonstration of Black conducting a reasonable-looking defence – as you would expect from one of China's best players. Still, even if you are not sure by now of how to breakthrough, the idea of counting the pieces allows the rest of us to try and guess Short's intentions by just adding more pieces to the kingside.

15 ♚h3!

In his comments afterwards Short revealed that this was the hardest move of the game because he offers up a pawn without having a conclusive follow-up. Nevertheless, a key factor in his decision making would surely be that all his pieces are well placed for a kingside attack, which means once again that he will have a lot of tactical opportunities.

15...♞xe4!

Black accepts the challenge and grabs the pawn. If instead:

a) 15...♙xe4 16 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 17 ♙d3 d5 18 ♙xe4 dxe4 19 ♖xe4 and White has the better chances.

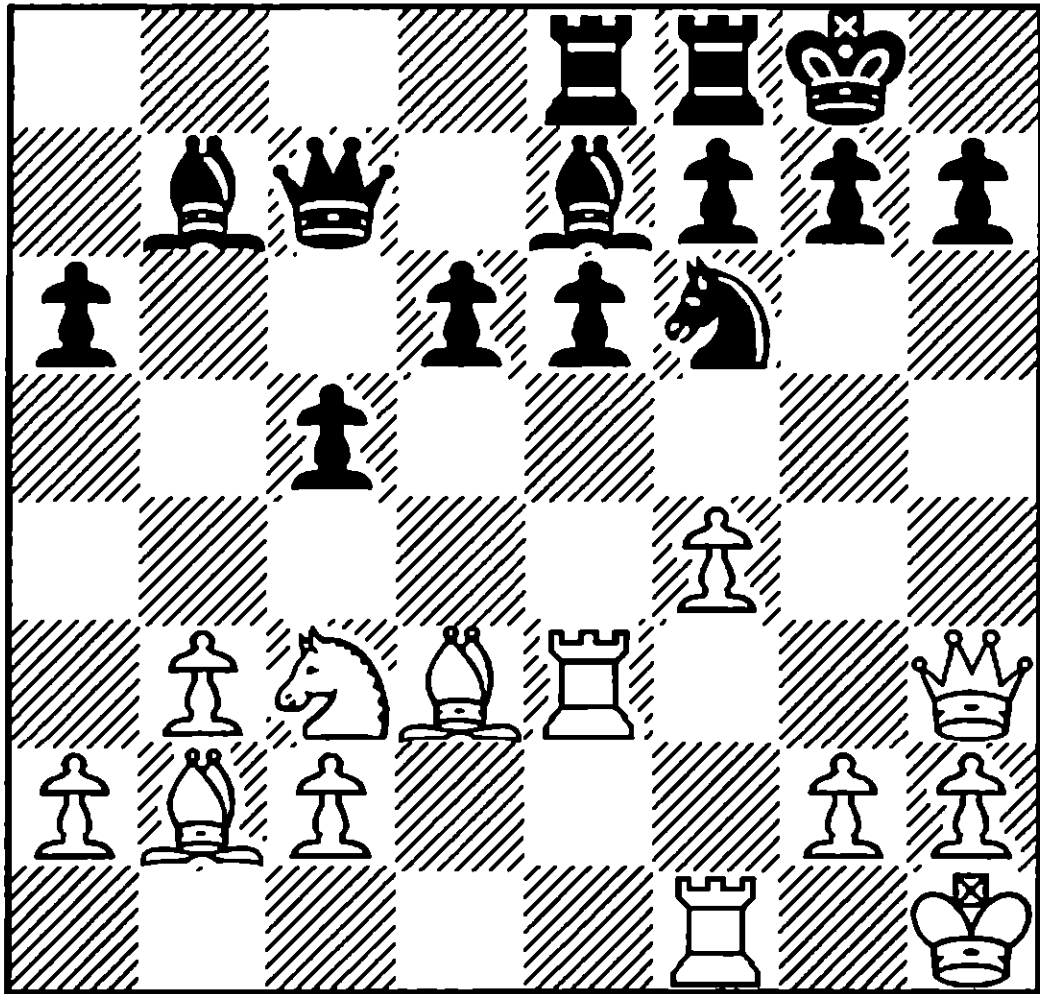
b) 15...d5 16 e5 ♞d7 17 ♙d3 gives White promising play.

16 ♙d3 ♞f6

The knight returns to f6 to protect against mate on h7. After 16...d5 White can regain material equality with interest: 17 ♞xe4 dxe4 18 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 19

Rxe4 Wd8 (a casual move such as $19...\text{Rd8?}$ is quickly punished by $20 \text{ Wg3! g6 21 Wc3 f6 22 Rxe6}$ winning) 20 We3! and White has an edge thanks to the superior pawn structure.

17 Re3



This fits in well with the general strategy of adding more pieces to the attack because White is now in a position to move the rook along the third rank to help influence matters. Indeed, the threat now is a combination very similar to the one I outlined at the start of the chapter in Kwiatkowski-Gregory.

17 Nd5?! is harmless in view of $17...\text{Qxd5 18 Qxf6 g6 19 Qxe7 Rxe7 20 Qxa6}$ (otherwise White is just a pawn down) $20...\text{Ra8}$ and Black has the advantage.

I suspect Black had been focused on the tactical line starting with 17 Nb5 which unveils a discovered attack on the king's knight, but in this case Black should be fine; e.g. $17...\text{axb5 18 Qxf6 g6}$ (or $18...\text{h6 19 Qxg7 Qxg7 20 Wg4+ Qh8 21 Wh5 Qxg2+ 22 Qg1 Qg7 23 Wg4+}$ and a draw is the best White can

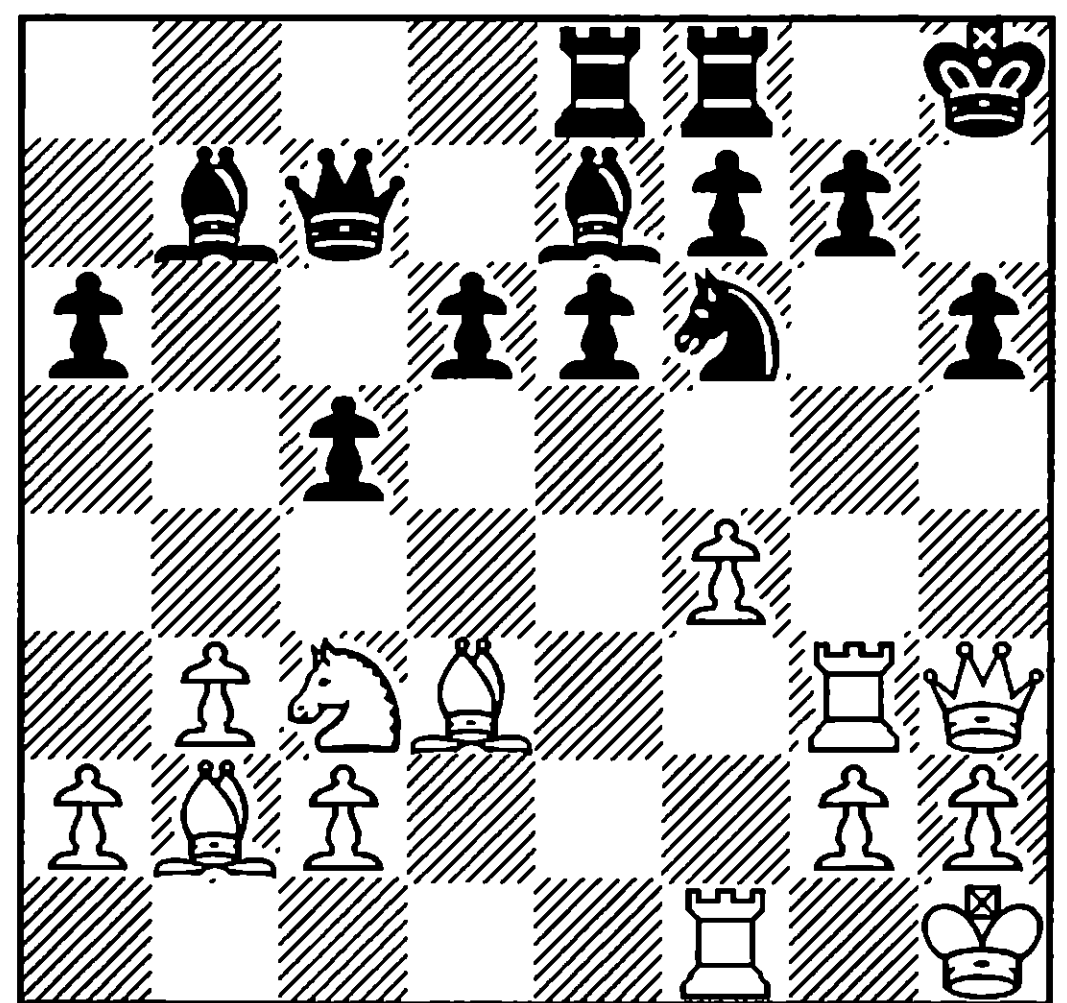
hope for) 19 Qxe7 (instead 19 Qb2?! is well met by $19...\text{c4}$, disrupting White's array of attacking pieces) $19...\text{Rxe7 20 Qxb5}$ with roughly equal chances.

17...g6

Black blunts the might of the light-squared bishop but at the same time enhances White's dark-squared bishop.

$17...\text{Rd8?}$ is even worse as it allows a pretty finish: $18 \text{ Nd5! Qxd5 19 Qxf6 g6}$ (or $19...\text{h6 20 Wxh6! gxh6 21 Rg3}$ mate) $20 \text{ Wxh7+! Qxh7 21 Rh3+ Qg8 22 Rh8}$ mate.

In his notes to the game Short does his best to prove that White also has plenty of attacking chances after $17...\text{h6 18 Rg3}$ (threatening to take on h6) $18...\text{Qh8}$ and then:



a) 19 Rxg7 looks good but is really a silent draw offer; i.e. $19...\text{Qxg7 20 Wg3+ Qh8 21 Wh3 Qg7 22 Wg3+ Qh8 23 Wh4}$ and the game will soon be drawn.

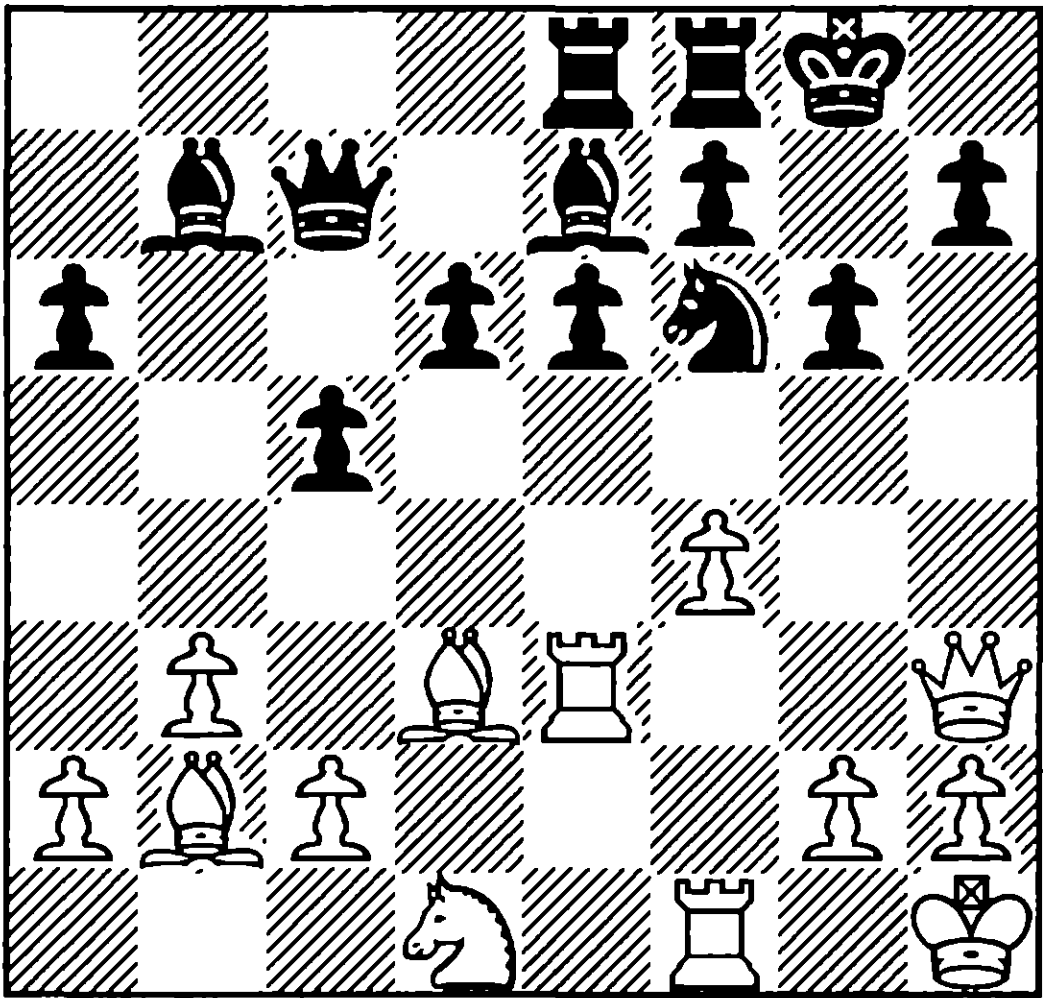
b) $19 \text{ Nd1! Rg8 20 Ne3 Wd8!}$ ($20...\text{d5?}$ loses to $21 \text{ Qxf6 Qxf6 22 Ng4}$, intending to take on f6 or h6) 21 Rg5! Wa8!! (the only way to save the posi-

tion considering that 21...♖ef8? runs into 22 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 23 ♖h5 and again White will take on h6, winning) 22 ♖f3!! ♕xf3 23 gxf3 ♔d8 (or 23...d5 24 ♕xf6! ♕xf6 25 ♘g4! ♕xg5 26 fxg5 and the attack is overwhelming) 24 ♖h5! ♘xh5 25 ♔xh5 ♕f6 26 ♔xf7 e5 27 ♔g6 e4 28 fxe4 ♕e5 (28...♕xb2 allows 29 e5! threatening mate on h7) 29 fxe5 dxe5 30 ♘g4 with a big advantage.

c) 19 ♕c1!?, with the idea of f4-f5 followed by sacrificing on h6, would also be tricky for Black to answer.

18 ♘d1

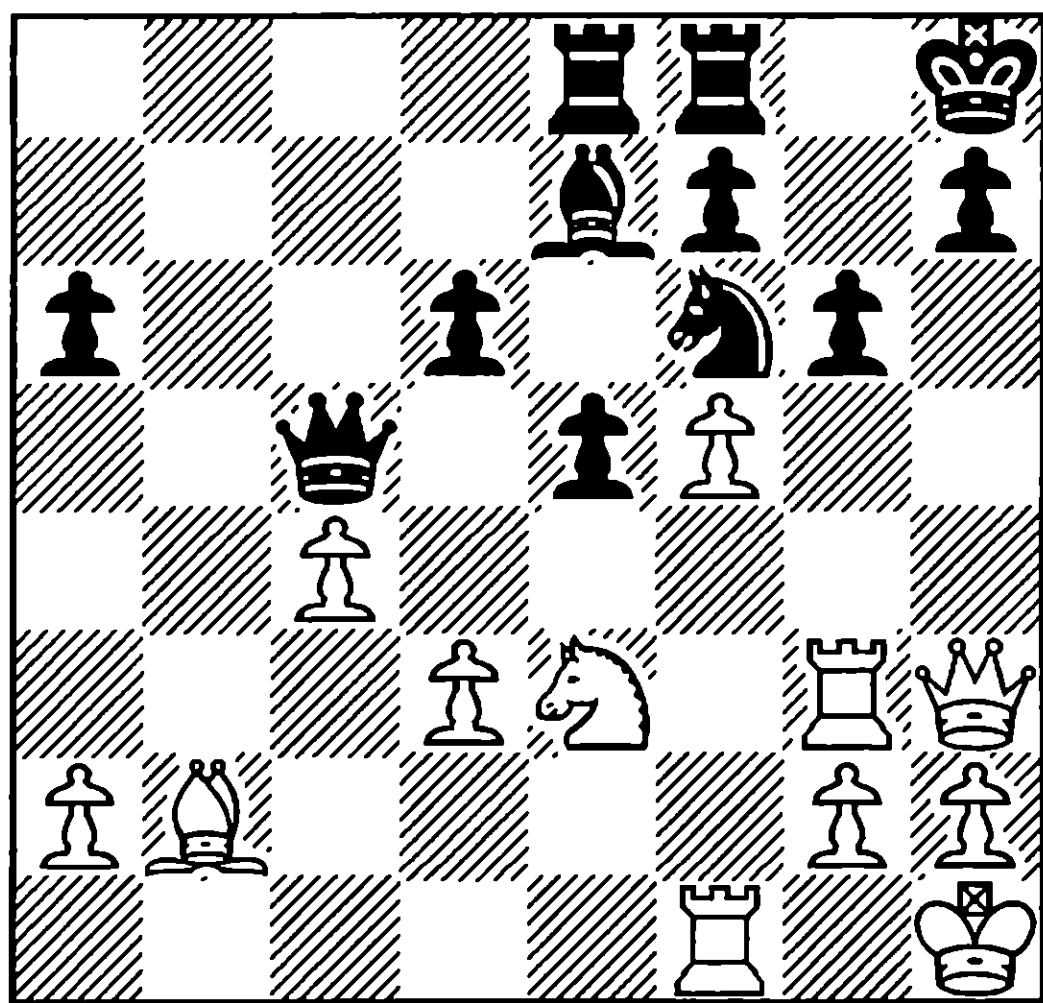
The bishop on b2 is revealed, ready to strike at the black kingside. Meanwhile the knight can manoeuvre to g4 via f2 in order to make the most of the slight weakening of the pawn shield now that a black pawn no longer covers the f6 or h6-squares.



22 ♖e3

Good planning – another piece is added to the attack to make up for the light-squared bishop being blocked.

22... ♙xd3 23 cxd3 ♕h8



It seems that Black is just about surviving, having beaten off the initial challenge instigated by 20 f5, but White's pieces are still on good squares to carry on attacking.

24 ♖c1!

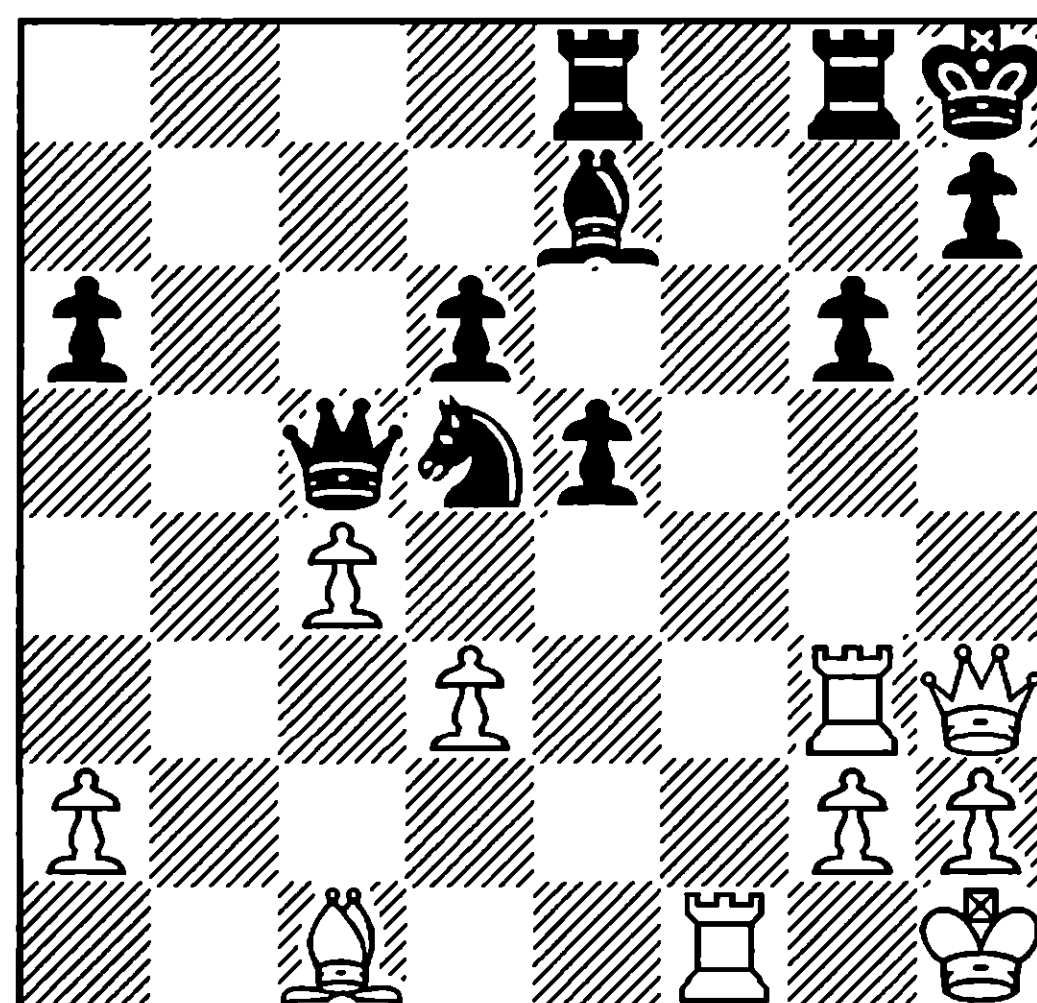
A high-class move; White is patient enough to switch the bishop once again to a place where it can potentially (i.e. when the knight on e3 moves) do some damage to the kingside. Such a move might at first glance seem beyond a lot of us, but if, with no obvious breakthrough available, you use the formula of *count the pieces*, then adding another piece must increase the tactical options. The desire to win a pawn with 24 fxc6 fxc6 25 ♖xc6 is not quite so convincing after the stunning 25... ♘e4!, ensuring at least equality due to the threat of a back rank checkmate.

24... ♖g8?

It makes sense to defend the g6-pawn but now Black goes rapidly downhill. This is the problem with defending, even at the highest level – the need to find the perfect move each time is an arduous task.

A better defence is 24... ♖d4!, though after 25 ♘g4 White still has all the chances. For example, 25... e4 26 ♖h6 ♖g8 (or 26... ♘h5 27 ♖h3! exd3 28 f6 winning) 27 ♘xf6 ♙xf6 28 ♖xh7+! (the same idea as in the actual game) 28... ♙xh7 29 ♖h3+ ♙h4 30 ♖xh4+ ♙g7 31 f6+ ♖xf6 32 ♙h6+ ♙h7 33 ♖xf6 and wins.

25 fxc6 fxc6 26 ♘d5! ♘xd5



White wants to remove the defender of h7 for a good reason and Black duly obliges. Perhaps 26... ♘h5 would prolong the struggle, although after 27 ♖gf3 White has a massive advantage in attacking terms; e.g. 27... ♖c6 28 ♙h6 ♙d8 29 ♖f7 ♘g7 (White was planning g2-g4 anyway) 30 ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 31 ♖h6 ♖eg8 32 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 33 ♖f8+ ♖g8 34 ♖f7 and checkmate will bring the game to a halt.

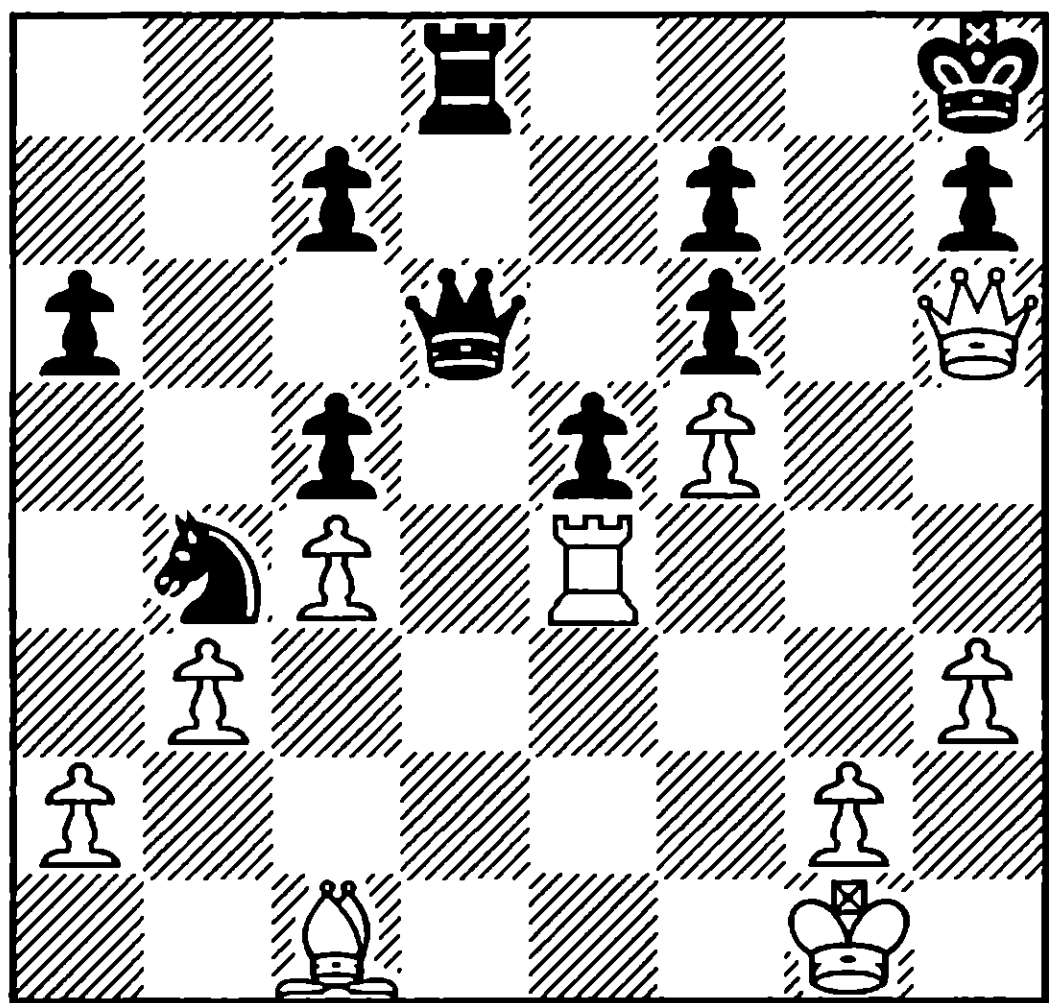
27 ♖xh7+! 1-0

A magnificent conclusion to a model example of the patient attack. Black resigned due to 27...♔xh7 28 ♖h3+ ♔g7 (or 28...♘h4 29 ♖xh4+ ♔g7 30 ♘h6+ ♔h8 31 ♘f8 mate) 29 ♘h6+ ♔h7 30 ♘f8+ ♘h4 31 ♖xh4 mate.

History Always Repeats

The finish to Short-Ye Jiangchuan was spectacular, but even those victories can prove useful if you remember the mating pattern used in the game. In time such mating nets will become more familiar and such gems should instinctively be noticed as possibilities in your own games. An easy way to demonstrate the idea is to offer up a puzzle which fooled a lot of experienced players at a coaching session, but I have a feeling it will be easier to spot after seeing the previous game:

J.Nunn-L.Portisch World Cup, Reykjavik 1988



Black to play

Here the Hungarian grandmaster played 32...♖g8. How did White win?

No prizes for spotting 33 ♖xh7+, forcing resignation due to 33...♔xh7 34 ♖h4+ ♔g7 35 ♘h6+ ♔h7 36 ♘f8 mate.

The idea of reinforcing the attack by adding more and more pieces to it continues to work wonders:

Game 4 S.Gligoric-Du.Rajkovic Yugoslav Championship 1975 *Dutch Defence*

1 d4 f5

The Dutch Defence is a popular attempt by Black to seize the initiative against 1 d4 and was once used by such great players as Alekhine. In recent years other openings have become the favourites of the elite, but there are still a few of them who use the Dutch occasionally to win as Black, such as the American Grandmasters Hikaru Nakamura and Alexander Onischuk.

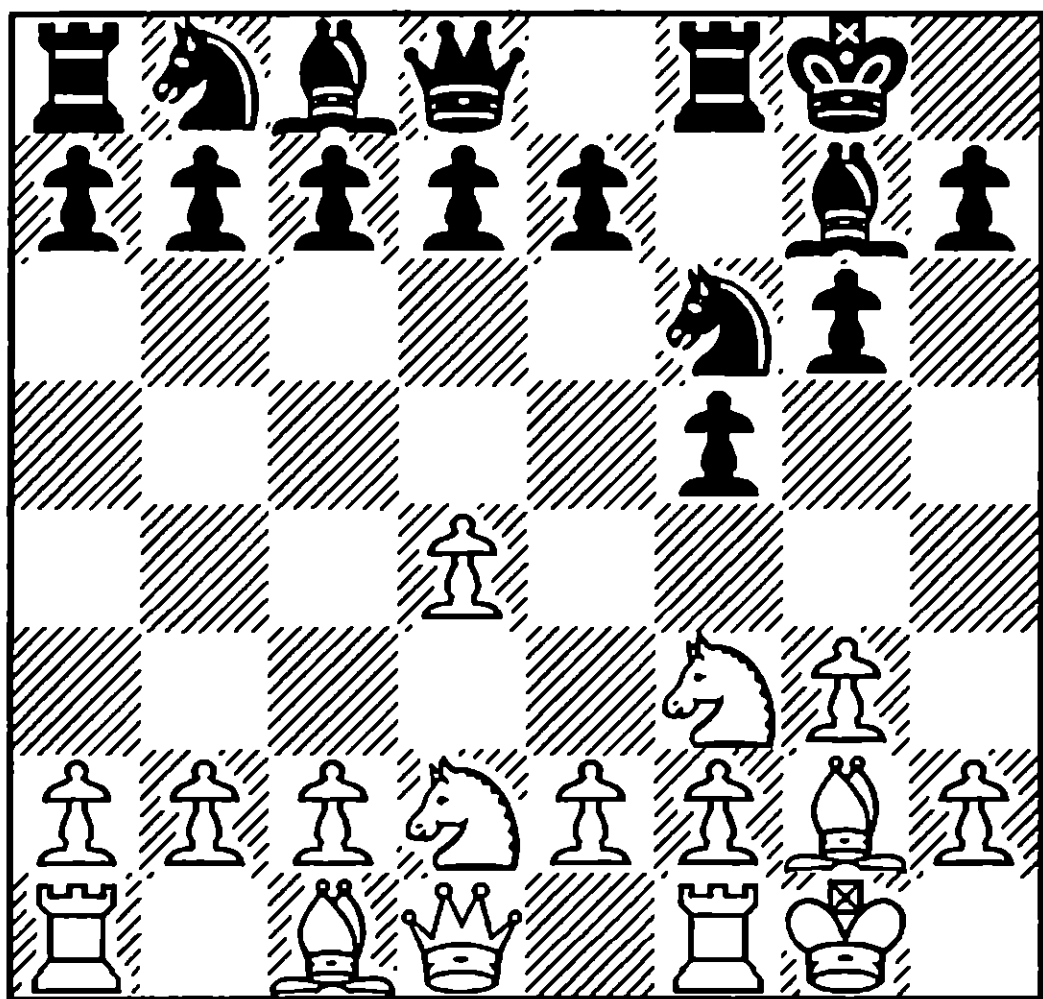
The opening is named after Elias Stein (1748-1812) who lived in Holland and wrote a book for his chess pupils. One of the lines he recommended for Black was 1 d4 f5, which he claimed to be the best defence against the queen's pawn opening.

2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♘g2 g6 4 ♘f3

It is argued by many generations of players that the best way to take on the Dutch is to develop sensibly, fend off

the kingside attack and then open the centre and win. Yes, it's a bit primitive, but the advance of the f-pawn at an early stage is regarded as slightly risky because in the long term the black king is exposed.

4...♙g7 5 0-0 0-0 6 ♘bd2!?



This is a little bit different from the norm and, according to Gligoric himself, was inspiration at the board. It avoids the usual c2-c4 followed by ♘c3 and instead tries to fast forward the central pawn break with e2-e4.

6...d6 7 c3

A sound and reliable continuation, supporting the d-pawn before playing the expected ♖e1 and e2-e4.

7...♘c6

Rajkovic has plans to open the position himself with ...e7-e5 and so prepares for this advance. Other moves:

a) 7...♙e8 8 ♖e1 d5!? looks odd. Black would argue that a stonewall pawn formation is worthwhile because, although the d-pawn had already moved, at least it stops White's initial plan. However, after 9 ♘e5

White would say thank you very much because he can install a knight on e5 and still think about e2-e4 when prepared by f2-f3. H.Schussler-F.Ochoa de Echaguen, Palma de Mallorca 1989, continued 9...g5 10 ♙b3 e6 11 c4 (11 f3 is worth considering) 11...c6 12 cxd5 exd5 13 e4!? fxe4 14 ♘xe4 (the pin of the d5-pawn by the white queen makes this combination possible) 14...♘xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♙h8 16 ♖e1 ♙d8 17 ♙d2 and White had the advantage due to his lead in development and because the g5-pawn is weak.

b) 7...h6?! (a slow move; Black should really be developing or improving his pieces) 8 ♙c2 ♙e8 9 e4 f4 (or 9...fxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♙f5? 11 ♙b3+! ♙h7 12 ♘xf6+ ♙xf6 13 ♙xb7 with a big advantage) 10 e5! ♘h5 (10...♙f5? attacks the white queen but then 11 ♙b3+ is fatal since the knight can be taken on the next move) 11 ♘h4 g5 12 ♘g6 ♖f7 13 ♙d5 ♘c6 (instead 13...e6 would cut off the bishop on c8 and allow 14 ♙f3, winning a piece, as 14...g4 no longer works) 14 ♖e1 led to a distinct advantage for White in N.Murshed-R.Sangma, Dhaka 2005.

8 ♖e1

Gligoric is happy to make clear his intentions to open the position with e2-e4, safe in the knowledge that he has no obvious weaknesses to worry about.

8...♙h8

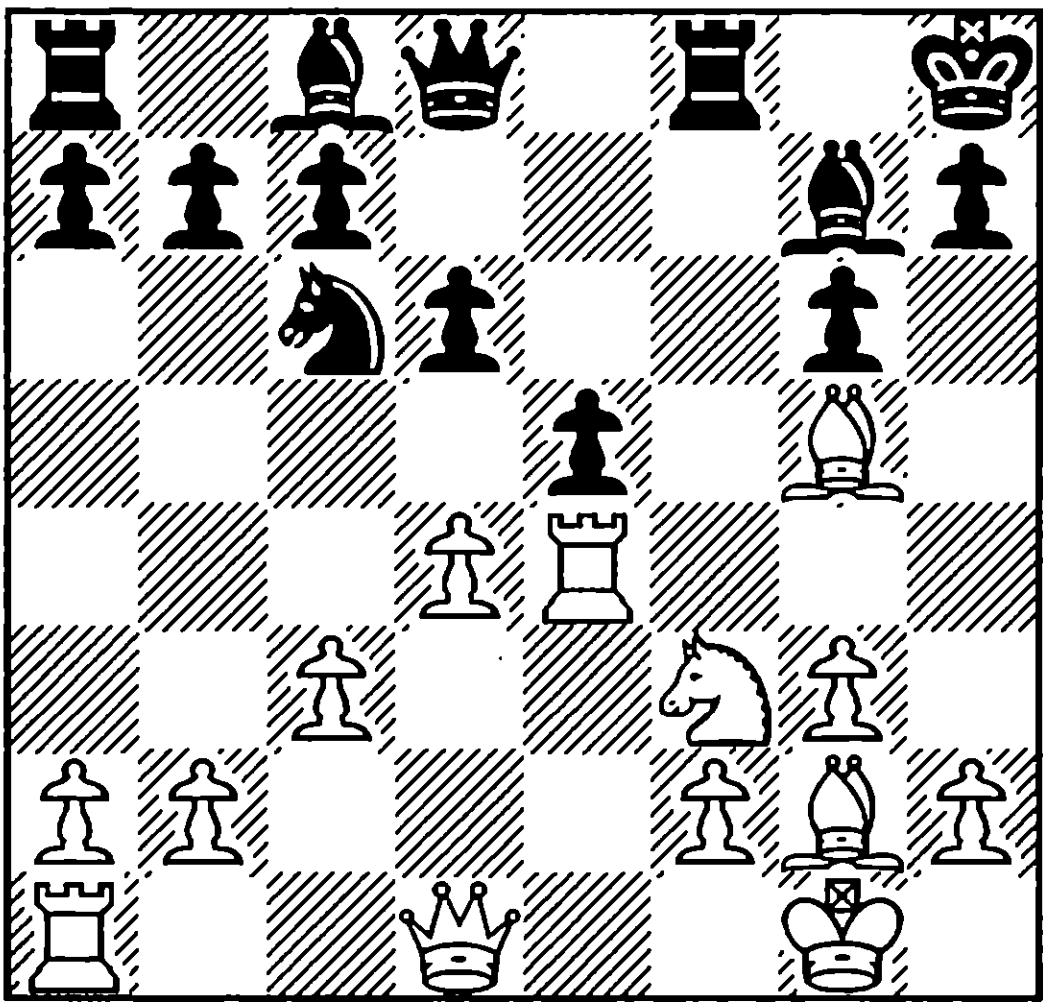
Black is playing a waiting game and moves his king out of harm's way, but

perhaps he should be a little more assertive. I would suggest 8...e5!?, when 9 ♖b3+ (or 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 e4 with roughly equal chances) 9...♔h8 10 ♞c4 gives White a slight initiative.

9 e4 fxe4

If Black tries to be clever with 9...f4, White should accept the pawn on offer with 10 gxf4!, when a sample line runs 10...♞h5 (otherwise Black would just be a pawn down) 11 d5 ♞b8 12 f5 gxf5 13 ♞c4 ♔e8 (or 13...fxe4 14 ♖xe4 ♙f5 15 ♖h4! – an echo of the main game – 15...♞f6 16 ♞d4! ♔c8 17 ♞e3 ♙g6 18 ♙h3 with a clear advantage) 14 e5 and White has the initiative while the knight on h5 is poorly placed.

10 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 11 ♖xe4 e5 12 ♙g5!



Another piece is developed and by attacking the queen White gains time.

12...♔d7 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♔e2

The queen gets out of the way to allow the a1-rook to join in the action when the time is right. Now that is a top-class decision but it is possible to understand the reasoning of the grandmaster – when you notice that

White is shifting his pieces to the king side so that it is now five vs. two on the kingside.

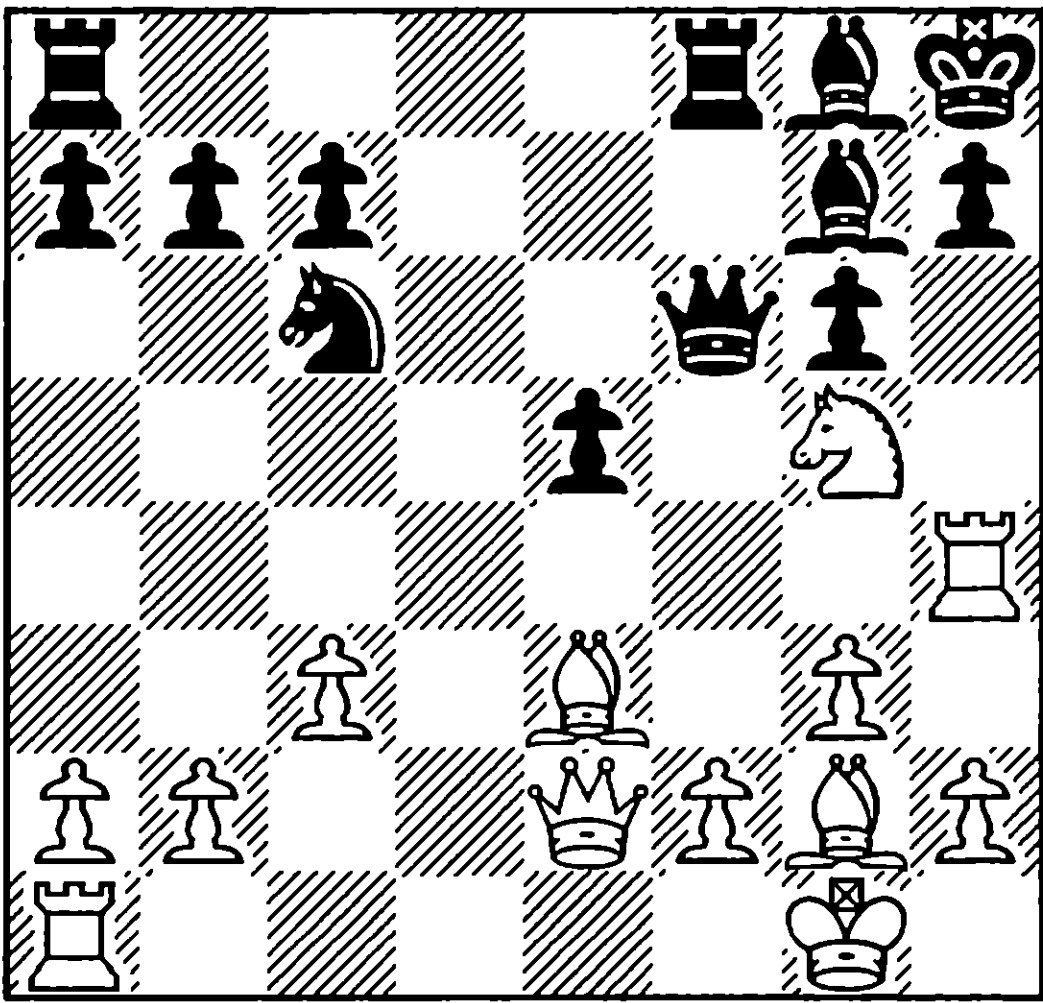
14...♔f7

This is the whole point of Black's play: to generate counterplay on the f-file.

15 ♖h4!

A clever way to undermine Black's plans by aiming at the weak pawn on h7, and in time the threat of ♞g5 will loom large.

15...♙e6 16 ♙e3 ♔f6 17 ♞g5 ♙g8



18 ♔g4!

The queen is now ready to help out tactically, and the big threat is that a casual move such as 18...♖ad8 runs into 19 ♞xh7! ♙xh7 20 ♔h3 with a winning advantage because Black cannot adequately defend h7. Gligoric is keeping an eye on the fine details of the position, but once again the general attacking plan can be understood by the need to have sufficient pieces near the black king to multiply attacking chances.

18...h5

The initial attack has been beaten back, but the problem is that Black has felt compelled to move his h-pawn to avoid a tactical catastrophe. This means that White will have new targets to aim at, such as the pawn on g6, and can even think about g3-g4 to make the most of the pin on the h-file.

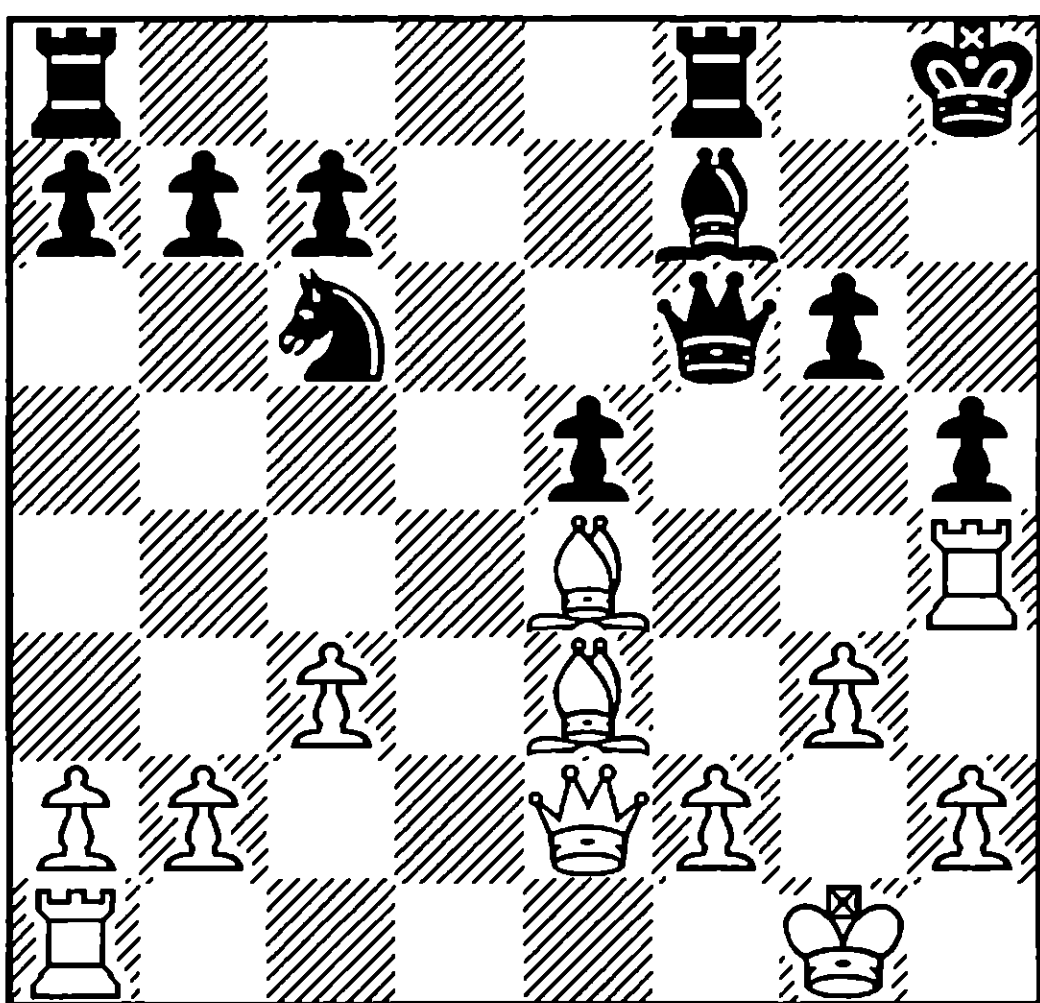
19 ♖e4 ♔f7

If 19...♔f5, exchanging queens in an effort to thwart the attack, then 20 ♖xf5 ♔xf5 21 g4 ♔ff8 22 gxh5 leaves Black with a hopeless ending.

20 ♔e2 ♕f6

Black is obliged to do something active, otherwise White will serenely advance the g-pawn and plunge Black into despair.

21 ♖xf6 ♔xf6 22 ♕e4 ♕f7



23 ♔f1

A good advert for *count the pieces* – to help complete the attack Gligoric moves the last remaining piece not involved in the action to the kingside. Finding the right plan is easier when you know such a golden rule.

23...♔g8 24 f4 ♔fe8 25 f5 g5 26 ♔xh5!

A simple but clever move: White gives up the exchange to destroy the black kingside.

26...♕xh5 27 ♔xh5 1-0

“Chess is a game that requires the utmost precision. Each move is a treasure to be spent for the best reasons – and in the opening, above all, for the quick development of pieces.” – Svetozar Gligoric.

The sudden explosion of activity devoted to an attack can be awesome if you are the one attacking. If you are a defender the key is to cut out pointless moves and ward off threats. Here is a supreme example of how it can all go wrong, taken from the ultimate level – a World Championship match.

Game 5 V.Anand-V.Topalov World Championship (4th matchgame), Sofia 2010 *Catalan Opening*

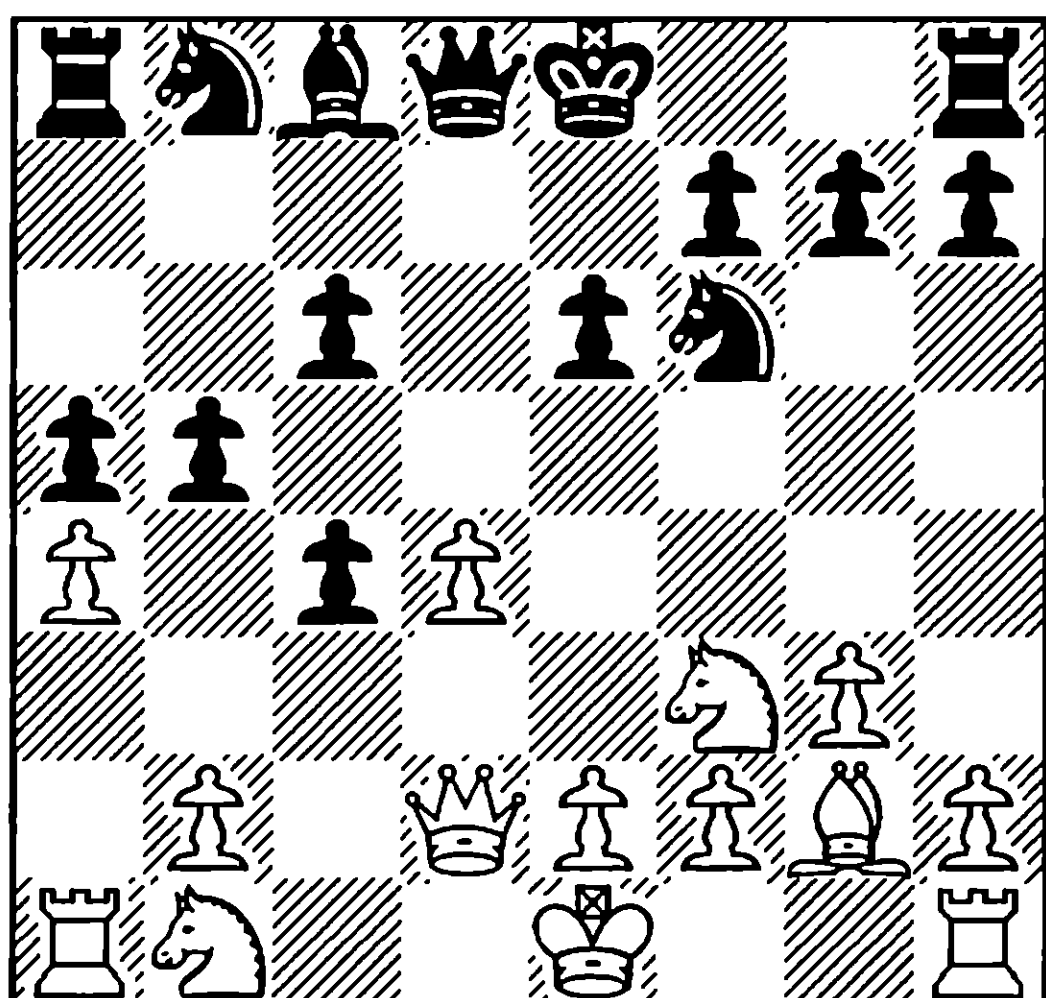
1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 d5 4 g3

The joke on the chess forums was that Anand’s match strategy was to copy the openings of Kramnik, who had beaten Topalov in their World Championship contest during 2006.

4...dxc4 5 ♕g2 ♕b4+ 6 ♕d2 a5 7 ♔c2 ♕xd2+ 8 ♔xd2

Or 8 ♖bxd2 b5 9 a4 c6 10 b3 cxb3 11 ♖xb3 0-0 and Black is fine.

8...c6 9 a4 b5



10 ♖a3

This was a new move for Topalov, who had already faced this line before and lost. In V.Kramnik-V.Topalov, World Championship (1st matchgame), Elista 2006, he had come up against 10 axb5. The game continued 10...cxb5 11 ♔g5 0-0 12 ♔xb5 ♙a6 13 ♔a4 ♔b6 14 0-0 ♔xb2 15 ♘bd2 ♙b5 16 ♘xc4 ♙xa4 17 ♘xb2 ♙b5 18 ♘e5 ♙a7 19 ♙f3, when White has a tiny edge and eventually ground out a win, though Black has plenty of improvements before then.

10...♙d7 11 ♘e5

A pretty line is 11 axb5 cxb5 12 ♔g5 h6! 13 ♔xg7?? ♙h7! and the queen is trapped.

11...♘d5 12 e4 ♘b4 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♙fd1

White has sufficient compensation for the pawn because his pieces are better co-ordinated, and he aims to time the breakthrough with d4-d5.

14...♙e8 15 d5! ♔d6

15...exd5 16 exd5 cxd5 17 axb5 ♘d7 18 ♘c6 ♘xc6 19 ♔xd5! is good for White.

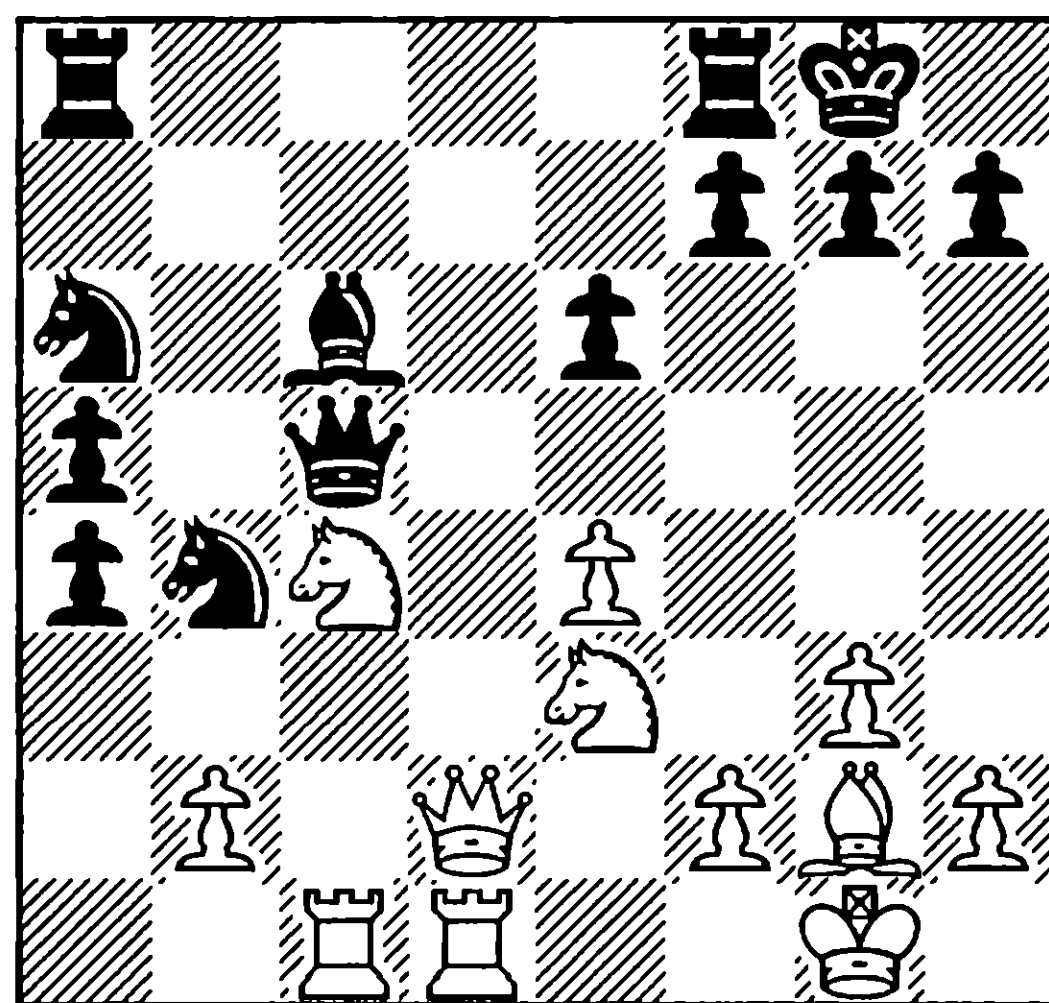
16 ♘g4 ♔c5 17 ♘e3

The perfect square, supporting d5. Topalov's problem is that capturing on d5 activates the bishop on g2, whereas leaving it allows d5xc6.

17...♘8a6 18 dxc6 bxa4

Or 18...♙xc6 19 axb5 ♙xb5 20 ♘axc4! ♙xc4 21 ♙ac1 with a nice edge.

19 ♘axc4 ♙xc6 20 ♙ac1



This looks good for White because he is threatening a discovered attack on the black queen by moving his knight from c4. However, one could argue there is no danger of an attack because it is currently only 2 vs. 1 on the kingside with the black rook defending.

20...h6?!

The idea is to stop a future ♔g5 by White, but it could be viewed as being rather cautious. Maybe 20...♔e7 is necessary to shore up the defence, when 21 ♘xa5 ♙fd8 22 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 23 ♔c3 gives White an initiative.

21 ♘d6 ♔a7 22 ♘g4!

In the space of a few moves the position has been transformed. Even in a

World Championship encounter one can make an informed judgement by taking into account the number of pieces prepared to attack. In this case it is clear that the majority of the black pieces are too far away to defend the king which is relying on the king's rook. In contrast, White has two well-placed knights and an imminent sacrifice available on h6 to help bring the queen into the equation.

22...♖ad8?

Topalov sense of danger deserts him because the pin on the d6-knight does not deter White from carrying out his attacking strategy. 22...f6 is probably best, though it still leaves Black with plenty of defensive work to do.

23 ♖xh6+! gxf6 24 ♔xh6 f6

The f-pawn is advanced to allow the black queen to sweep across to try and defend the second rank. However, White will just add more pieces to fulfil his mating ambitions. Black can squirm but there is no real defence unless he is willing to lose material. Alternatively:

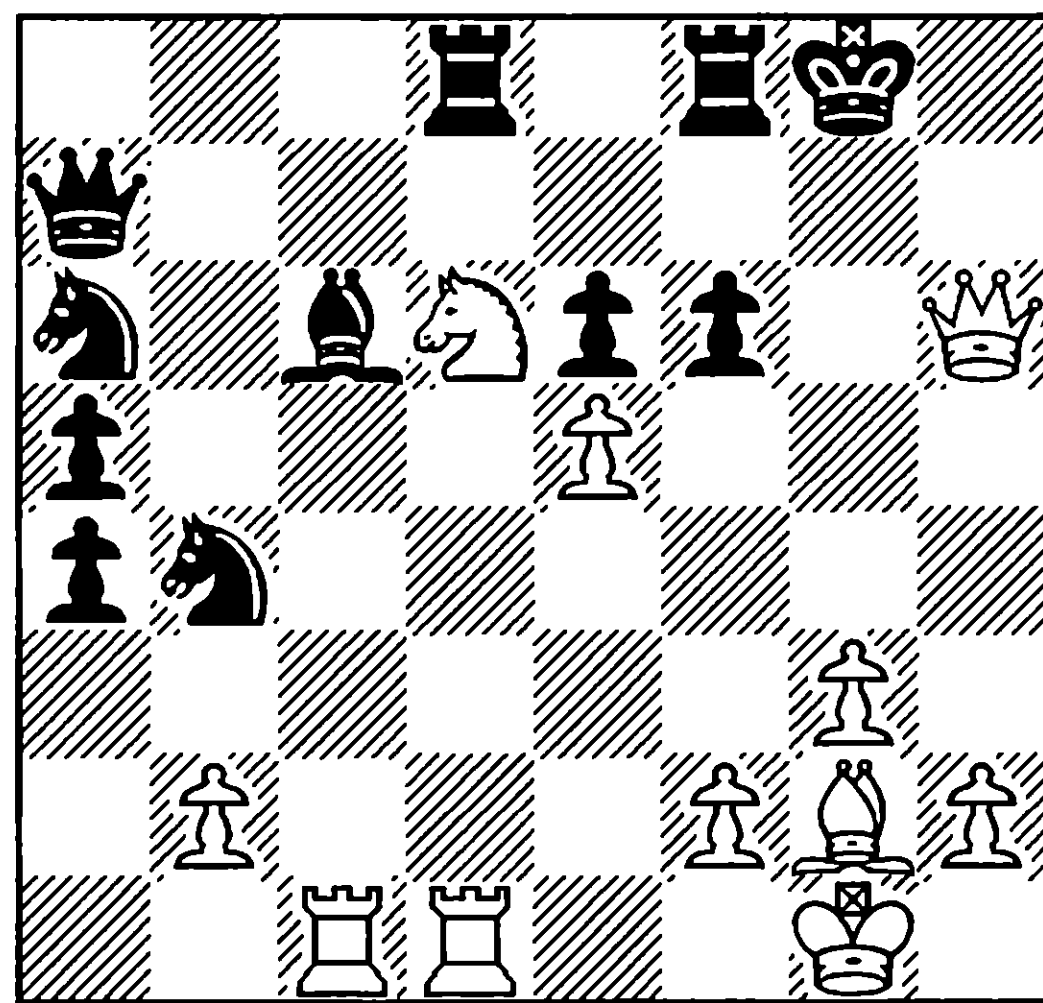
a) 24...e5 25 ♔g5+ ♕h8 26 ♔f6+ ♕h7 27 ♖f5 ♖g8 28 ♔h6 is mate.

b) 24...f5 25 exf5 ♖xg2 (or 25...♖d5 26 f6!) 26 ♔xe6+ ♕h8 27 ♖c4! and the threat of ♖h4 is fatal.

c) 24...♖a8 might seem a good idea, since the loose bishop on c6 is always a problem when White plays e4-e5, but there is no time for such a luxury: 25 e5! f5 (25...♖xg2 26 ♔g5+ ♕h8 27 ♖c4 leads to mate) 26 exf6 ♔h7 27 ♔g5+ ♕h8 28 ♖c4 and as usual the impend-

ing threat of ♖h4 condemns Black to defeat. 28...♖g8 is no help due to 29 ♖f7+! ♔xf7 30 ♖h4+ ♔h7 31 ♖xh7+ ♕xh7 32 ♔h5 mate.

25 e5!



Anand went to play this winning move at once and thought twice about it. Or to be more precise, thought for 10 minutes and then played it.

25...♖xg2

25...♔g7 26 ♔xg7+ ♕xg7 27 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 28 ♖xc6 leaves White with a winning endgame.

26 exf6! ♖xd6

Or 26...♔h7 27 ♔g5+ ♕h8 28 ♖c4 and wins, since 28...♖g8 again runs into 29 ♖f7+! ♔xf7 30 ♖h4+ ♔h7 31 ♖xh7+ ♕xh7 32 ♔h5 mate.

27 ♖xd6 ♖e4

It is an impossible task to repel the attack. Even 27...♖d5, trying to cover c4, does nothing to help after 28 ♔g6+ ♕h8 29 ♖c4! (a lovely idea, but not surprising considering that the black king is caught in the corner of the board) 29...♖xc4 30 ♖d4! ♔h7 31 ♖h4 ♖f7 32 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 33 ♔e8 mate.

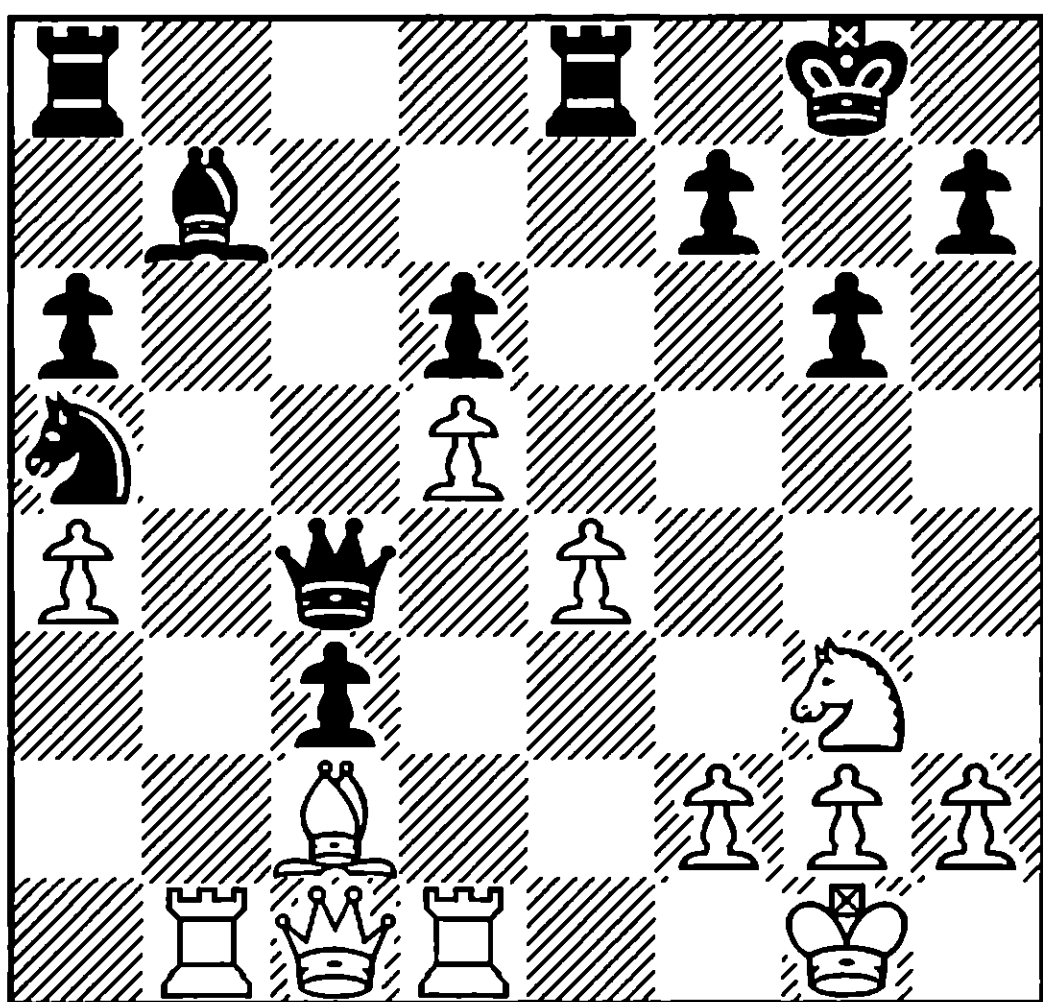
28 ♖xe6 ♜d3 29 ♖c2 ♚h7 30 f7+! ♚xf7
30...♖xf7 allows 31 ♖e8+ ♖f8 32
♖xf8 mate.

31 ♖xe4 ♔f5 32 ♖e7 1-0

“My best game of the match.” – Vishy Anand.

The way a position can be suddenly transformed by reinforcements to the attack is the deciding factor in a lot of games. Normally, the defender tries to thwart such action, but in the tense atmosphere of a tournament game it is easy to slip up.

G.Lane-P.Green
Oceania Zonal, Fiji 2002



White to play

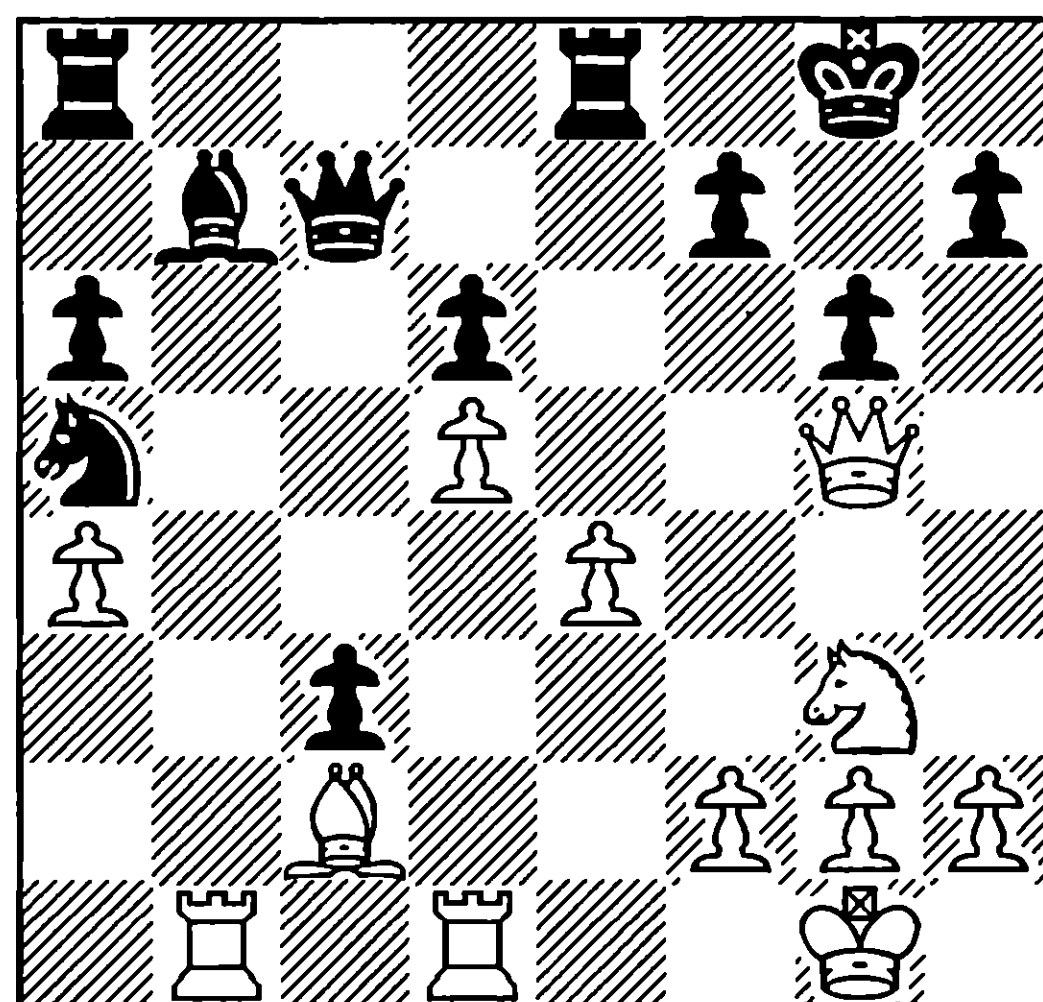
A cursory look at the position would suggest Black has few worries: his pawn on c3 seems strong and he has previously been quite active on the queenside. At the time I remember thinking that I should try and exploit

the dark squares around the black king. I have 1 vs. 1 with the knight against the rook, so it is time to add more pieces to the attack.














28 g5

I am already thinking of how to incorporate ♘f5 or ♘h5, but as usual in many of these situations Black is oblivious to the imminent danger.

28...♔c7



29 ♖d3!

The rook is ready to swing across to the kingside in pursuit of the black king which will mean 3 vs. 1 and therefore, and more importantly, increase my tactical possibilities. 29 h5 lacks bite in view of 29...e5 30 f6+ g7 31 f4 (instead 31 h5+ g8 32 f6+ g7 33 h5+ is one way to draw) 31...e7 32 g4 g5 and Black holds on.

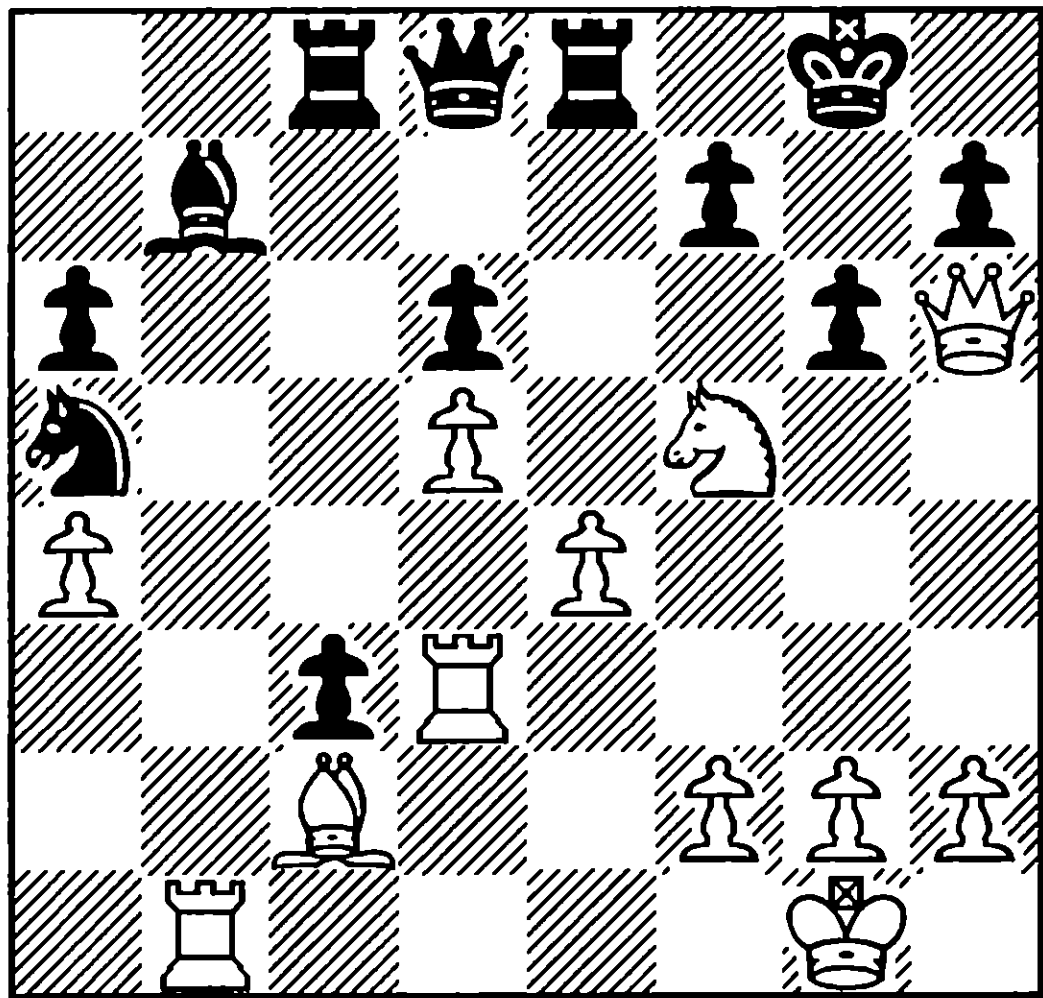
29...♖ac8?

A classic mistake. Black is misguidedly distracted by the desire to defend the c3-pawn, without realizing that he should be keeping an eye on defending his king.

30...♞f5

The knight plays an important role in creating mating options because it is a natural exploiter of the weak dark squares.

30...♞d8 31 ♞h6!



31...♞f6

If 31...gxf5 then 32 ♞g3+ leads to mate.

32 ♞h3 1-0

Black resigned, as after 32...♞h8 33 ♞xd6 forks the rooks and leads to a big advantage.

Just to reiterate this idea: I believe that being able to make a snap judgement by counting the pieces in an attack will help you to reach the next level. It's a general rule, but by now it should be obvious that this simple formula can be applied in game after game.

It is about time that Julian Hodgson had a chance to shine – after all, he was the one who initially enlightened me to his favourite strategy of *count the pieces*.

Game 6

J.Hodgson-J.Van der Wiel

Amsterdam 1994

Trompowsky Attack

1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♞g5

This move initiates the Trompowsky Attack. The name is in honour of the Brazilian Octavio Trompowsky (1897-1984) who played it at the Munich Olympiad in 1936. It attracted a certain amount of interest and he apparently included some games in his book *Partidas de Xadrez*. If you look in older sources you might also come across the name Opocensky, but that has faded ever since Hodgson, the most recent pioneer of the opening, nicknamed it the Tromp and the latter name stuck.

2...c5

Black strikes out at the centre. It is not a pawn sacrifice because 3 dxc5 can always be met by 3...♞a5+ followed by 4...♞xc5, while a more sophisticated approach would be a set-up of 3...♞c6, 4...e6 and 5...♞xc5.

3 ♞xf6 gxf6 4 d5

Hodgson helped to develop the ideas behind this line and it has since encouraged many imitators. The beauty of it is that the middlegames are still a lot less analysed than more traditional openings such as the King's Indian Defence.

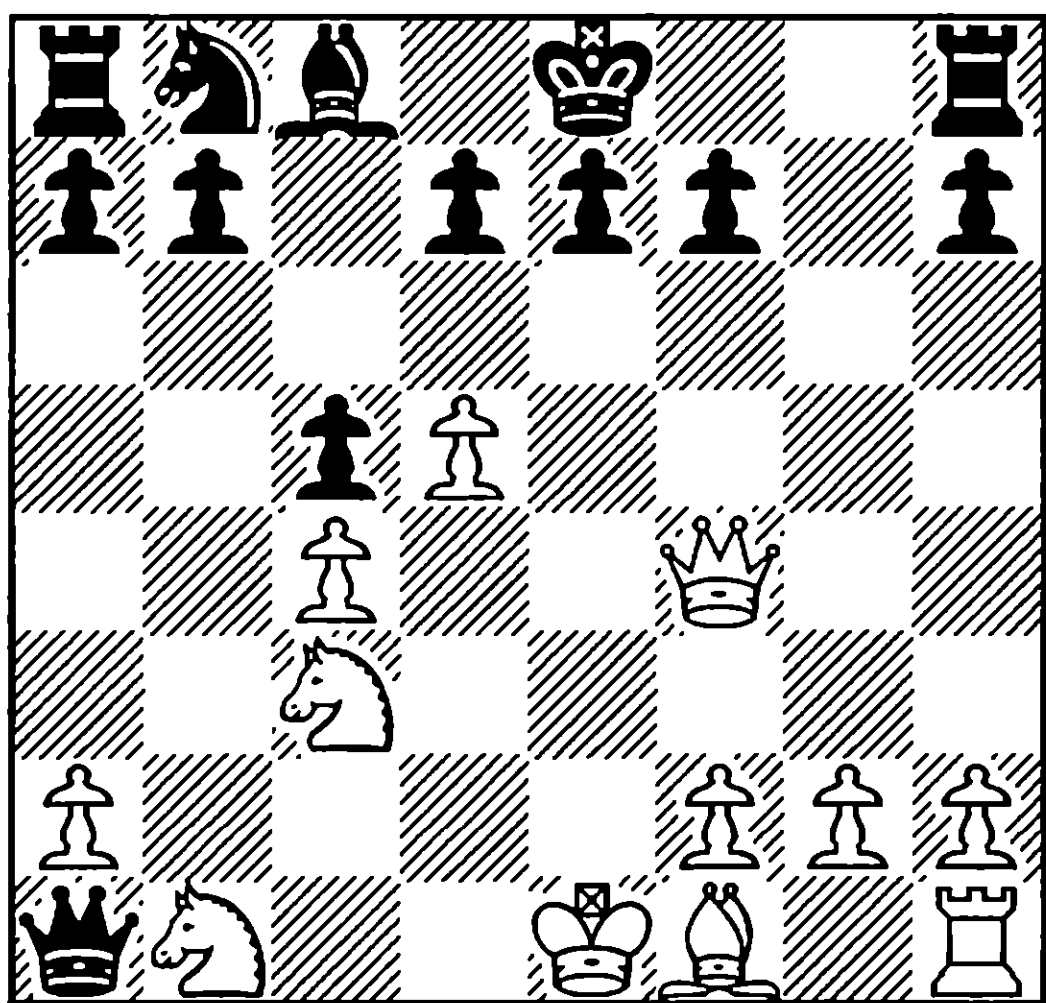
4...♞b6 5 ♞c1 ♞h6

Trying to deflect the white queen away from the defence of the b2-pawn.

6 e3 f5 7 c4! f4?!

Black is determined to play actively and encourage complications.

8 exf4 ♙xf4 9 ♔xf4! ♔xb2 10 ♘e2 ♙xa1 11 ♘ec3



After a forcing sequence it is time to take stock of the situation. White's point of view is that, although he only has a knight for the rook and pawn, it is more important that his queen is hovering ominously near the black king. Naturally, Black thinks he can defend adequately and then use the extra material to win the middlegame. The Dutch grandmaster is not keen on waiting for 12 ♔d2, trapping his queen in the corner, so tries to take the material and run.

11...♙b2

The idea of giving up material in return for an attack is still attracting attention. In M.Leon Hoyos-O.Piot, Capelle la Grande 2009, Black tried 11...d6, hoping to catch up on development by releasing the light-squared bishop. There followed 12 ♔d2 ♙f5 13 ♙e2! ♔g8 (13...♙xb1? is met by 14 0-0!

and the black queen will soon be trapped) 14 g3 ♙h3 15 f3 a5 (the problem for Black is that he is struggling to find a decent plan, while White can steadily improve his position) 16 ♙f2 ♙a6 17 ♔d1 ♔b6 18 ♔d3 ♙d7 19 ♘d2 ♙b2 20 ♔b1 1-0.

12 d6

White is doing the ultimate *count the pieces* scenario by trying to snare the black king after shedding material. He has a knight, queen and advanced d-pawn to aid the attack, whereas the majority of Black's pieces are still waiting to take part in the game. The point of 12 d6 is not only to promote the attack, but also to hold back a possible defence by locking in the bishop on c8.

12...♘c6

If 12...♙b6 then 13 ♘b5! is very awkward for Black, since the logical 13...♘a6? is crushed by 14 ♘1c3! e6 15 ♘d5! exd5 16 ♔e5+ and 17 ♔xh8 mate.

13 ♙d3

White brings another piece into the action and prepares to castle, which will enable him to add his rook to the offensive.

13...exd6

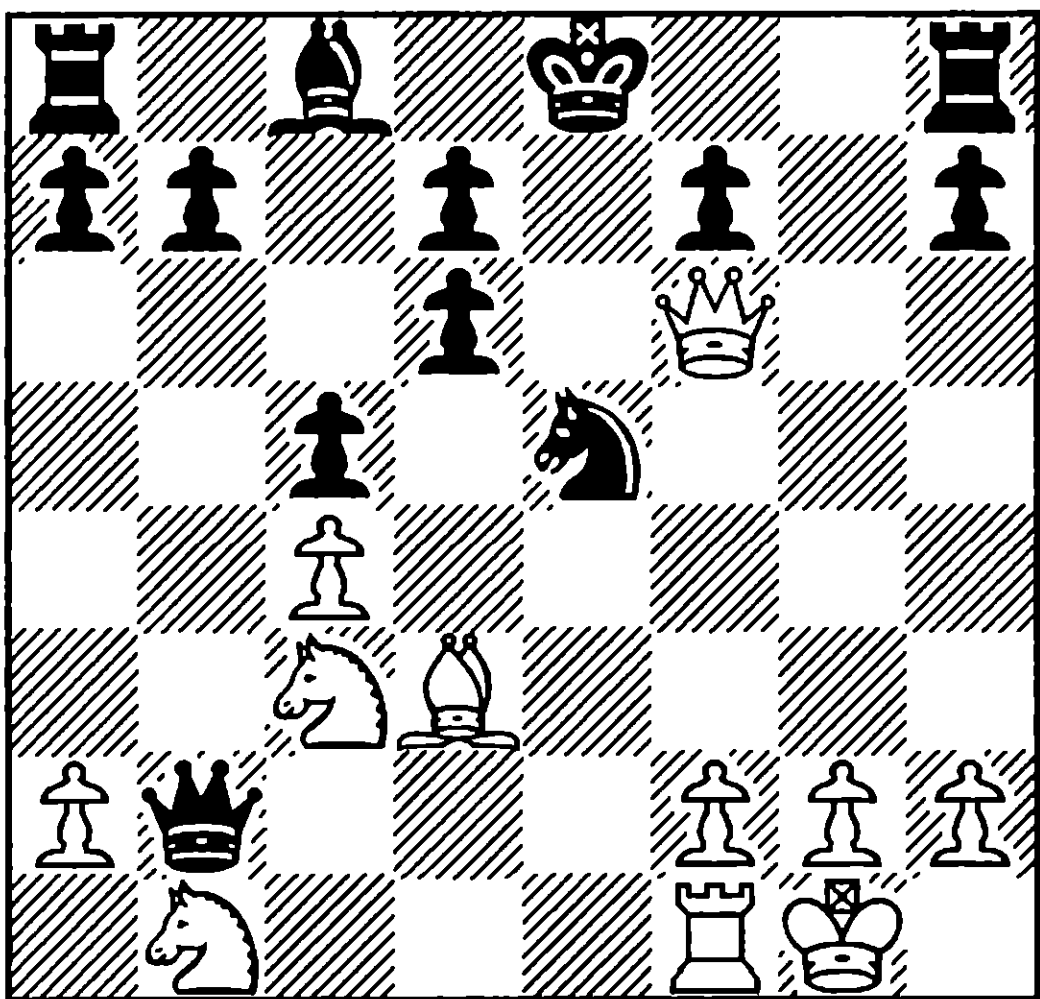
Ignoring the pawn on d6 just leads to more problems:

a) 13...♘b4 14 ♙e4 ♘c2+? 15 ♔d1 ♘d4 16 ♔e5! 0-0 17 ♔g5+ ♔h8 18 ♔h6 and the double mating threats against the rook on f8 and the pawn on h7 seal the result.

b) 13...♙d8 has been suggested, but after 14 0-0! I can't see how Black can

survive the wreck of his position. A sample line runs 14...♖e8 15 ♖e1 b6 16 ♖e2 (it is already time for Black to go home) 16...♜b4 17 ♘d5 ♜a5 18 dxe7+ ♖xe7 (of course 18...♘xe7 allows 19 ♜c7 mate) 19 ♜f6 with mate soon to follow.

14 0-0 ♘e5 15 ♜f6!



This looks like a fantastic position for White, and if it wasn't for the sacrifices there wouldn't be any doubt about it. As it is, we should once again count the pieces near the black king to make a judgement. It is easy to see that the queen, bishop and knight on c3 are already involved, while the rook is poised to join in the fun. Black's defensive task is extremely tough because his pieces lack harmony – three of them are still on their original squares, and his queen is far from the scene of action.

15...0-0

15...♖g8 runs into 16 ♙xh7 ♖g4 (or 16...♖f8 17 ♖e1 and White will soon force mate) 17 ♜h8+ ♖e7 18 ♘d5+ ♖e6 19 ♜f6 mate.

16 ♘d5

It is always nice to threaten mate in one move. Van der Wiel's position is bleak.

16...♖e8 17 ♜g5+ ♘g6

A forlorn effort to try and stem the tide of non-stop attack, but the king moves offer no hope either:

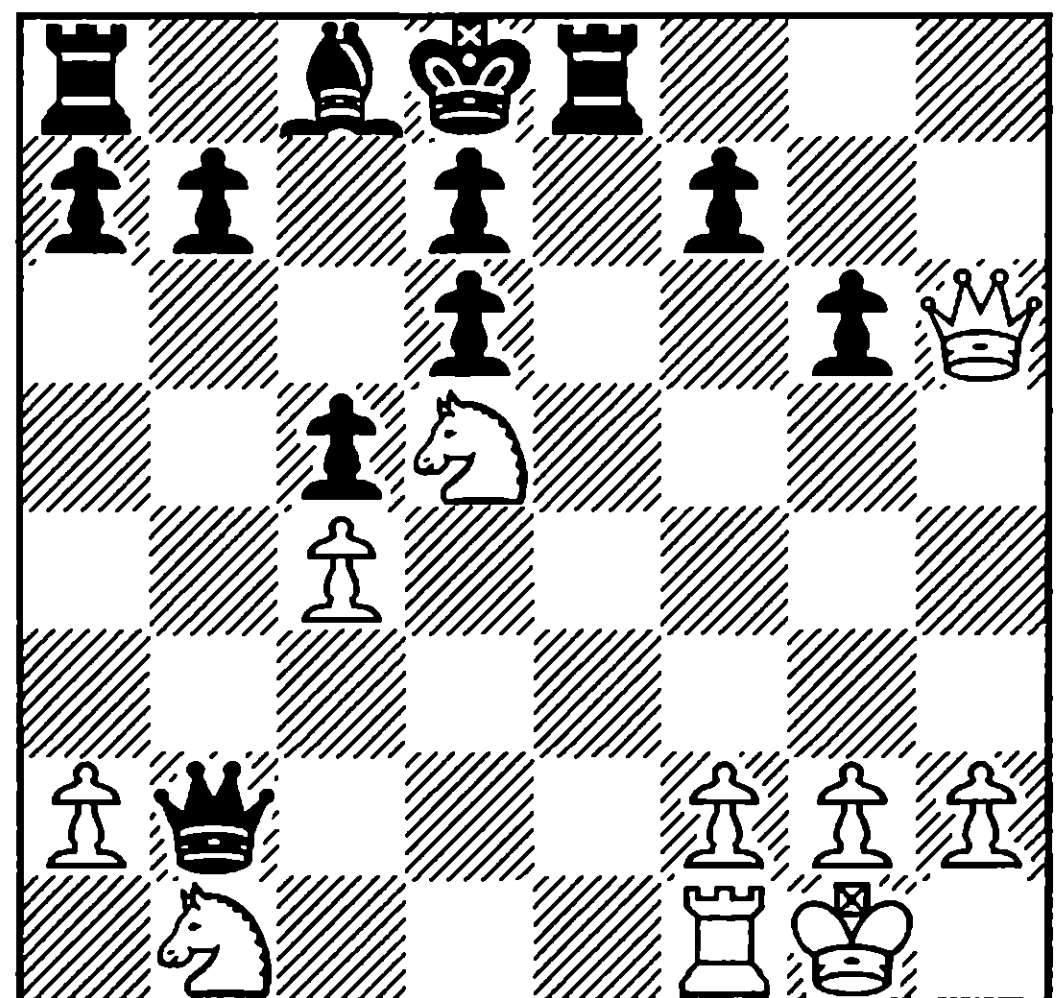
a) 17...♔f8 18 ♜h6+ ♔g8 19 ♘f6+ ♔h8 20 ♜xh7 mate.

b) 17...♔h8 18 ♘f6 ♘xd3 19 ♜h6 ♜xf6 20 ♜xf6+ ♔g8 21 ♜g5+ ♔h8 22 ♘c3 and White is easily winning.

18 ♘f6+ ♔f8 19 ♜h6+ ♔e7 20 ♘d5+ ♔d8

Or 20...♔e6 21 ♜h3+ f5 22 ♜xf5 mate.

21 ♙xg6 hxg6



22 ♘bc3! 1-0

A beautiful finale to a stunning game. The knight on c3 blocks the black queen, allowing White to win with ♜g5+.

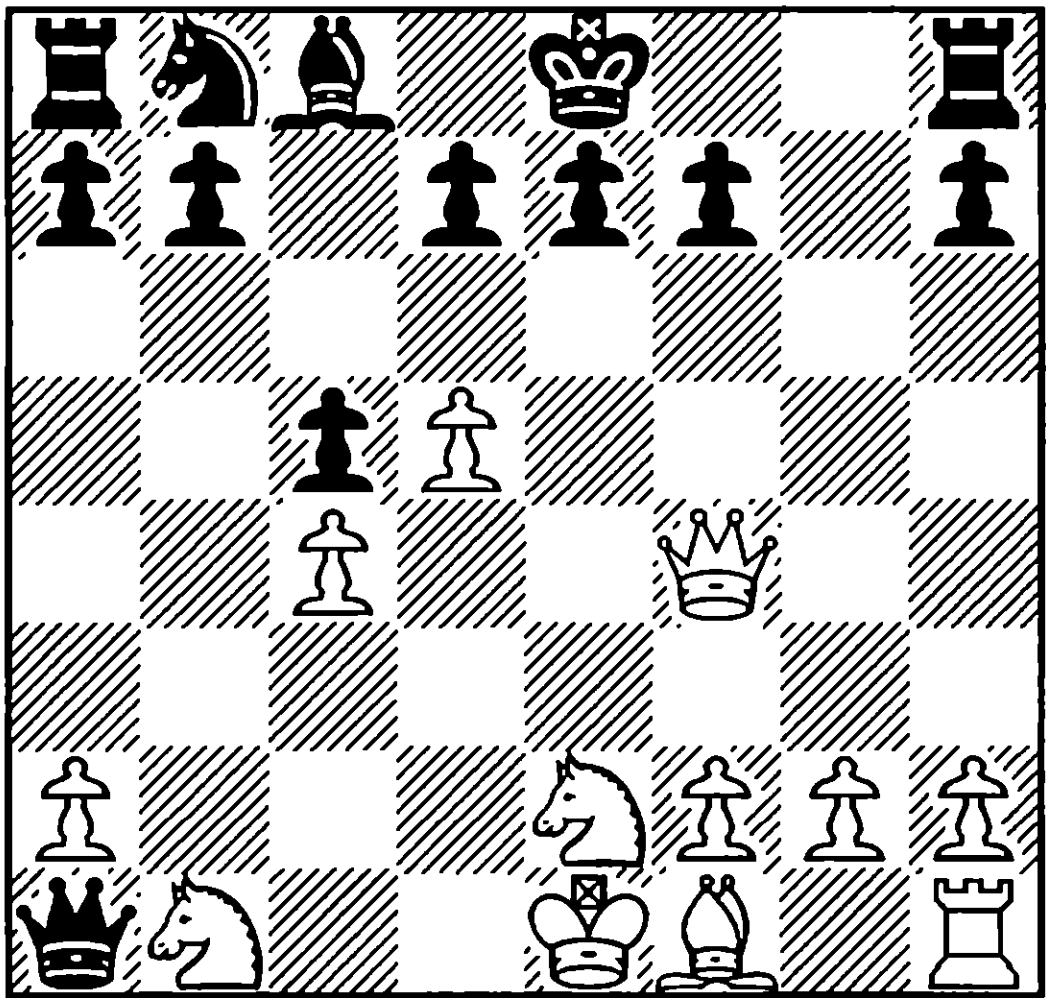
"But you tell the young people of to-day and they won't believe you." – Monty Python.

Naturally there are still some doubters, who assume that this line of the Tromp would not stand up to the modern rigours of computer-assisted analysis, and that the opening specialists amongst the world's elite would not fall into the trap of being greedy. Really?

So how come Alexei Shirov, who is in the world's top ten, tried vainly to refute Hodgson's play and ended up losing in humiliating circumstances after only 13 moves?

Game 7
P.Wells-A.Shirov
Gibraltar 2006
Trompowsky Attack

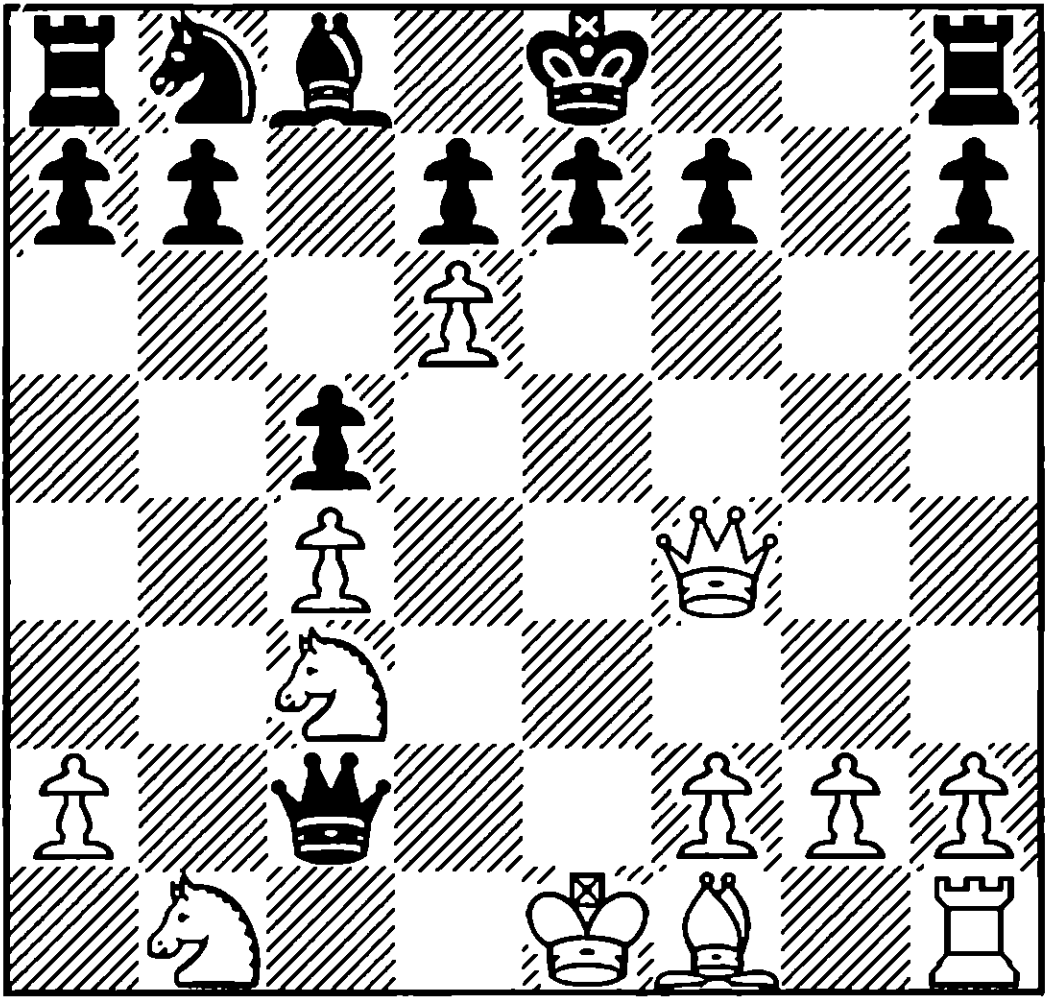
1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♟g5 c5 3 ♟xf6 gxf6 4 d5 ♞b6 5 ♞c1 f5 6 c4 ♟h6 7 e3 f4 8 exf4 ♟xf4 9 ♞xf4 ♞xb2 10 ♞e2 ♞xa1



It later transpired that Shirov had briefly looked at this variation on his computer before the game and trusted the instant verdict of good for Black. He

should have left the software on for more than a few seconds; it was only at the board that he realized there were serious problems with his position and just sank into a deep, deep think.

11 ♞ec3 ♞b2 12 d6 ♞c2?



13 ♞e3 1-0

Shirov was down to the last few seconds on the clock and was so disgusted with his position that he resigned. Black could find nothing positive and certainly 13...♞c6 14 ♟d3 ♞b2 15 0-0 is similar to the model example Hodgson-Van der Wiel above, except that here White has even gained a couple of moves thanks to the black queen wrongly going to c2 on move 12.

“The use of computers has made people more sceptical and now they are more prone to go pawn-grabbing unless there is definite compensation.” – Vishy Anand, World Chess Champion.

Here is another chance to see how the Tromp can work wonders. In this case, the idea of creating a majority of

pieces near the opposing king is again made easier by Black grabbing a b-pawn in the opening. This bold excursion by the black queen occurs in various openings but is fraught with danger for the defender. In a perfect world Black will win a pawn, withstand the pressure in the middlegame, and finally win the ending thanks to the extra pawn. The reality is that White will usually give up the pawn for the initiative or a positional advantage that carries on into the middlegame. The trick for the experienced player is often to judge the best time to return the extra pawn in return for something more positional, such as a strong outpost for a piece or even a possible counter-attack.

Game 8
V.Moskalenko-M.Erdogdu
 Ankara 2010
Trompowsky Attack

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♙g5 c5

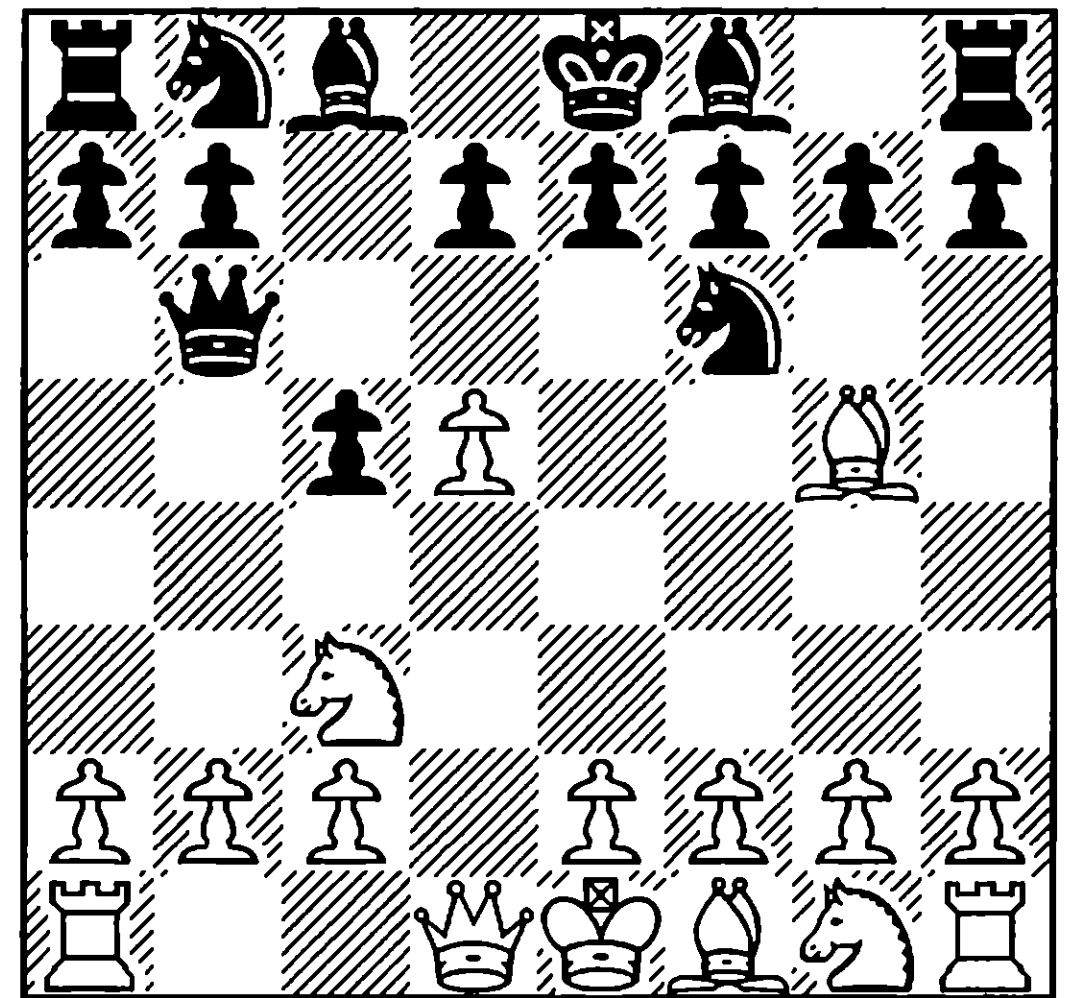
Black again strikes out at the centre.
3 d5!?

Instead of playing 3 ♙xf6 as in the two previous games above, White advances the d-pawn straightaway, creating a structure similar to the Benoni Opening. If Black does nothing special, one way for White to continue is with ♘c3 and e2-e4 to take control of the centre.

3...♙b6

An understandable response to the bishop sortie on g5, targeting the weak b2-pawn as a way of trying to refute the opening.

4 ♘c3!



This gambit is designed to give White a lead in development in return for the b-pawn. There is still considerable debate as to which side is better, but in practical terms such positions are tough for Black to defend because White enjoys a strong initiative.

4...♙xb2

Erdogdu has little choice but to grab the pawn, as otherwise the queen is poorly placed on b6 where it hems in the black b-pawn.

5 ♙d2

After five moves White is already poised to win as long as Black conveniently goes wrong. The immediate threat is 6 ♖b1 ♙a5 7 ♘b5, attacking the queen and threatening to plant a deadly check on the c7-square to win material.

5...♙b6 6 e4 d6

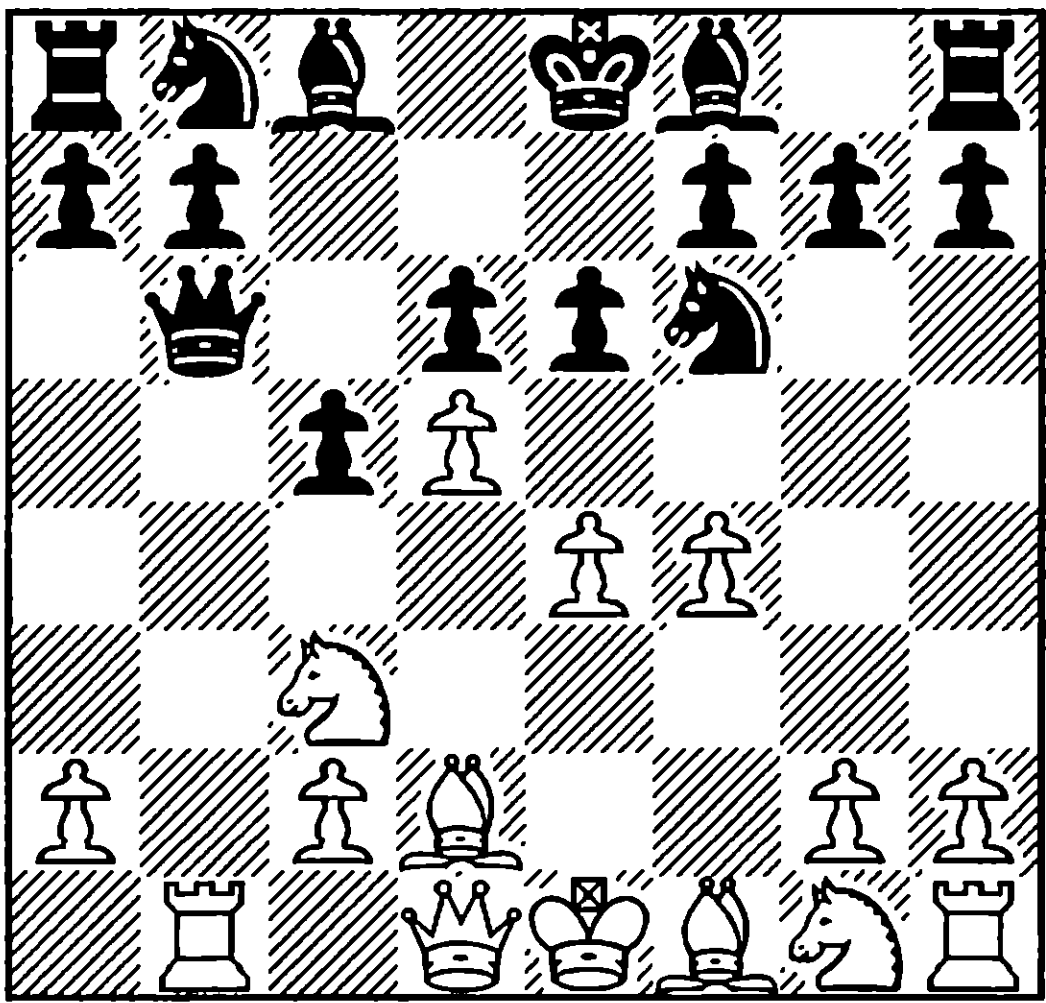
Black prevents White from safely

playing e4-e5. In H.Nakamura I.Nijboer, Wijk aan Zee 2004, Black stopped the advance of the white e-pawn more abruptly with 6...e5. There followed 7 f4 d6 8 ♘f3 ♘bd7 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 ♖c4, intending kingside castling with attacking opportunities, and White eventually won.

7 f4

The long-term plan for White is still to play e4-e5 at the right time, aided by ♘g1-f3 and perhaps a rook on e1, to force Black into a passive position.

7...e6 8 ♖b1



The queen is kicked away from b6 while also gaining time as White gets the rook into play. 8 ♖b1 was promoted by the Trompowsky connoisseur Julian Hodgson and is now accepted as the best line for White. At the moment he is happy to develop the pieces and wait to see when the e4-e5 push might be critical. In contrast Black has an extra pawn and the obvious plan of survival, although this is a tough call even for masters.

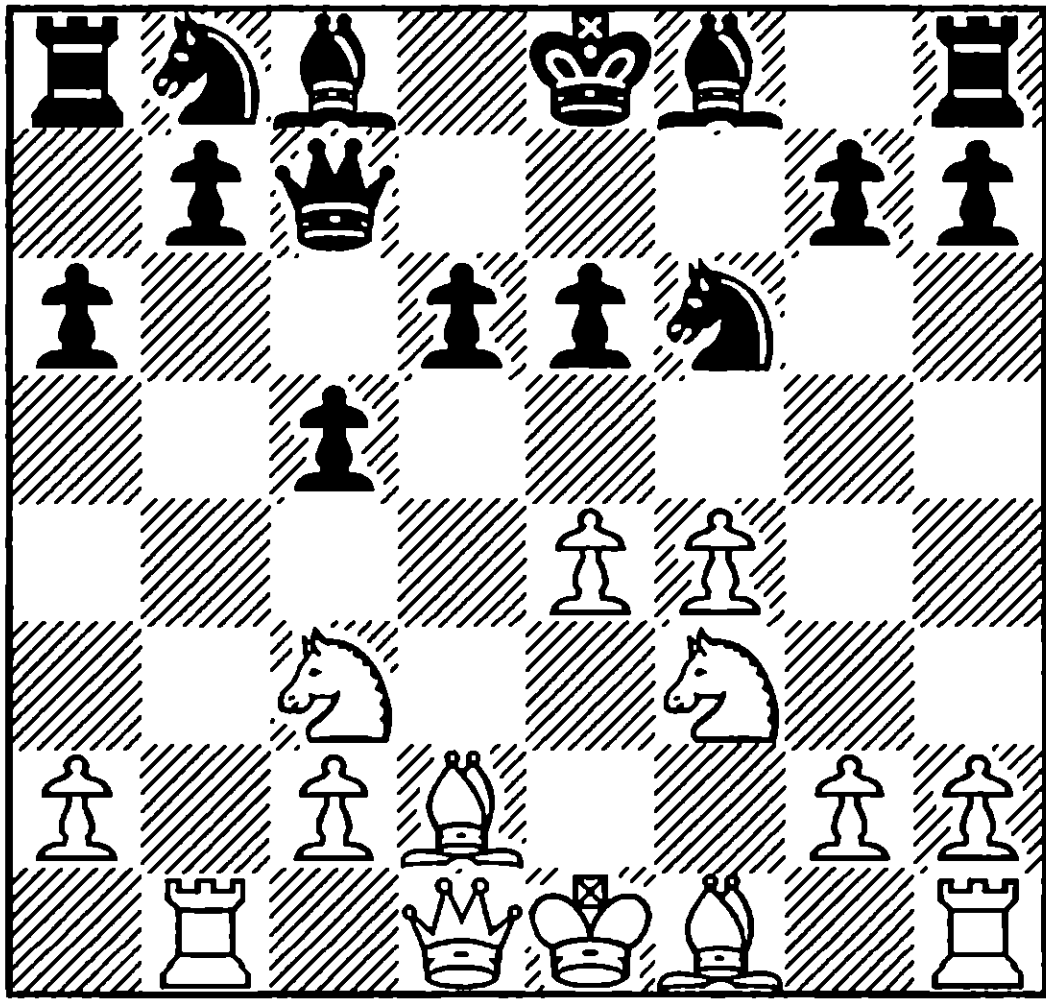
8...♙c7!?

The queen keeps guard against the e4-e5 advance. After 8...♙d8 9 ♗b5! White has the initiative; for instance, 9...♙d7 (9...♘bd7 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 ♘f3, aiming to play ♘g5 to target the e6-pawn, is encouraging for White) 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 e5!? dxe5 12 fxe5 ♘d5 13 ♙g4! with strong threats, the big one being ♙xe6+ to exploit the pin on d7-bishop, V.Moskalenko-E.Colls Gelaberto, Figueres 2009.

9 ♘f3 a6!?

Black is wary of allowing ♗b5+, so snuffs out the possibility while also preparing to gain space with ...b7-b5.

10 dxe6 fxe6



11 e5!?

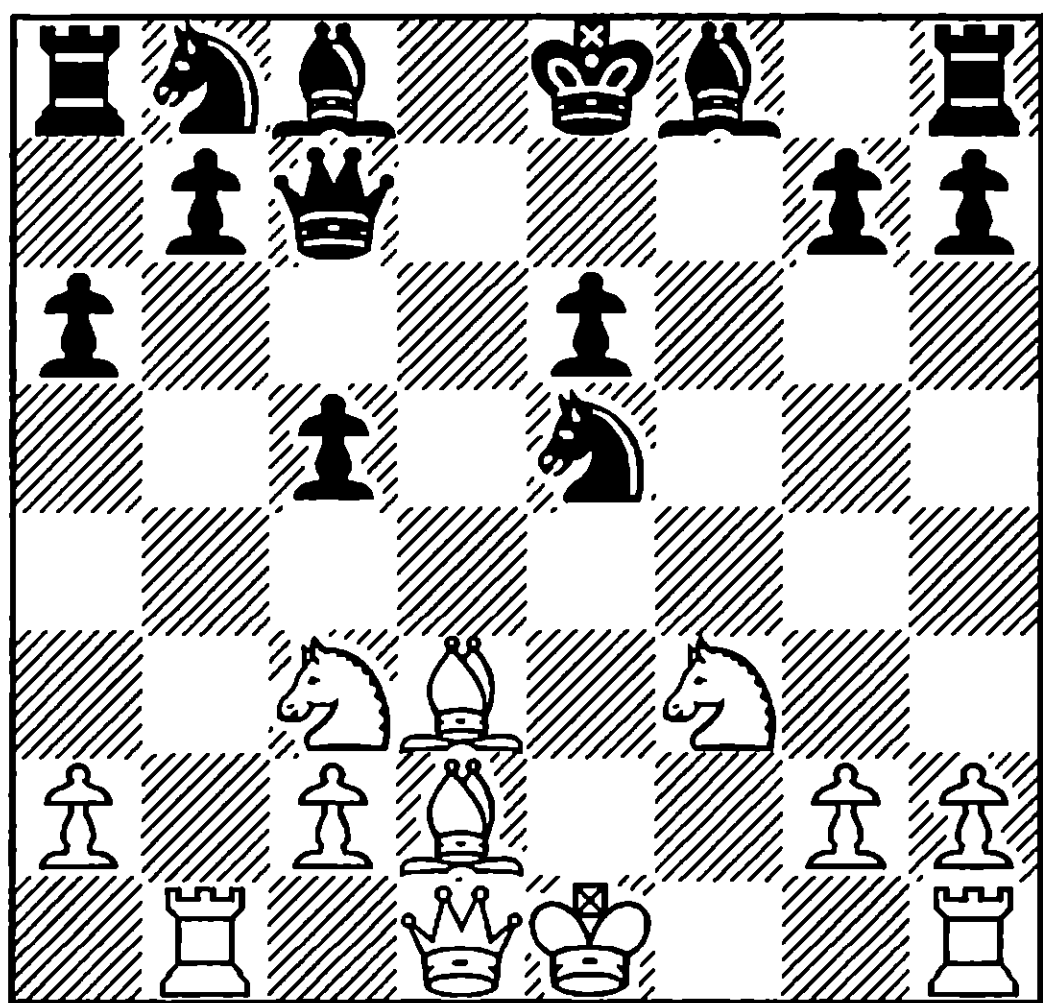
White decides to exert maximum pressure to make sure that Black does not have time to catch up on development and safely castle kingside. The alternative is 11 a4 but it lacks the cut and thrust of the text which will force Black to defend accurately.

11...dxe5 12 fxe5 ♘g4 13 ♙d3

It is a calculated gamble by the former Ukrainian champion to give an-

other pawn away. Still, it is possible for anyone to realize by once again counting the pieces that White must have some attacking compensation. White has five pieces in action compared to just two by Black and more telling is that fact that the king on e8 is likely to be marooned in the centre for some time.

13...♞xe5



14 ♖e4!

The bishop gets out of the way to avoid being exchanged on d3. Now the two pawn deficit is a little bit concerning, but it is still not obvious how Black will safely castle kingside because the h7-pawn looks vulnerable, which means the possible tactics must be increasing.

14...♞bd7

Black belatedly tries to shore up his defences by getting more pieces into the game. The natural alternative 14...♗d6 is strongly met by 15 ♞xe5 ♗xe5 16 0-0 which presents Black with problems because the white attack seems to be everywhere; e.g.

16...♗xh2+ 17 ♖h1 ♗d6 (17...♜e5 18 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 19 ♜xb7, threatening ♜f3-f7, gives White a clear advantage) 18 ♜h5+ ♔d8 19 ♗g5+ ♗e7 20 ♜f7 ♜e8 21 ♜d1+ ♗d7 22 ♗xe7+ ♜xe7 23 ♜f8+ ♜e8 24 ♜xe8 mate.

15 0-0 ♞f7?!

The knight retreat is played with the idea of setting up a defensive wall and blocking the f-file to cater for kingside castling (at the moment the rook on f1 hinders that objective). It sounds good, but with so many white pieces converging on the black king there is understandably a way to thrive in such a position. Instead:

a) 15...♗e7 16 ♗f4! 0-0 17 ♞xe5 ♜xf4 (not 17...♞xe5? 18 ♜h5 g6 19 ♜xe5 and Black can resign) 18 ♜h5! ♜xe5 19 ♜xh7+ ♔f8 20 ♜xf4+ ♜xf4 21 ♜f1 wins the queen.

b) 15...♗d6 16 ♞xe5 ♗xe5 17 ♜h5+ ♔d8 (not 17...g6? 18 ♗xg6+ hxg6 19 ♜xg6+ ♔d8 20 ♗g5+ and wins) 18 ♗g5+ ♞f6 19 ♜bd1+ ♗d7 20 ♜f7 also gives White excellent play.

c) 15...♞f6 might be the best chance, but 16 ♞xe5 ♜xe5 17 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 18 ♜xb7 is still promising for White.

16 ♞g5

The knight unveils the king's rook and ups the stakes by highlighting the plight of the black king stuck on e8.

16...♞f6

16...♞xg5 is obliterated by 17 ♜h5+! ♔d8 (or 17...g6 18 ♗xg6+ hxg6 19 ♜xg6+ ♔d8 20 ♗xg5+ ♗e7 21 ♗xe7+

♙xe7 22 ♖f7) 18 ♙xg5+ ♙e7 19 ♙xe7+ ♙xe7 20 ♖f7+ ♙d8 21 ♗g5+ and wins.

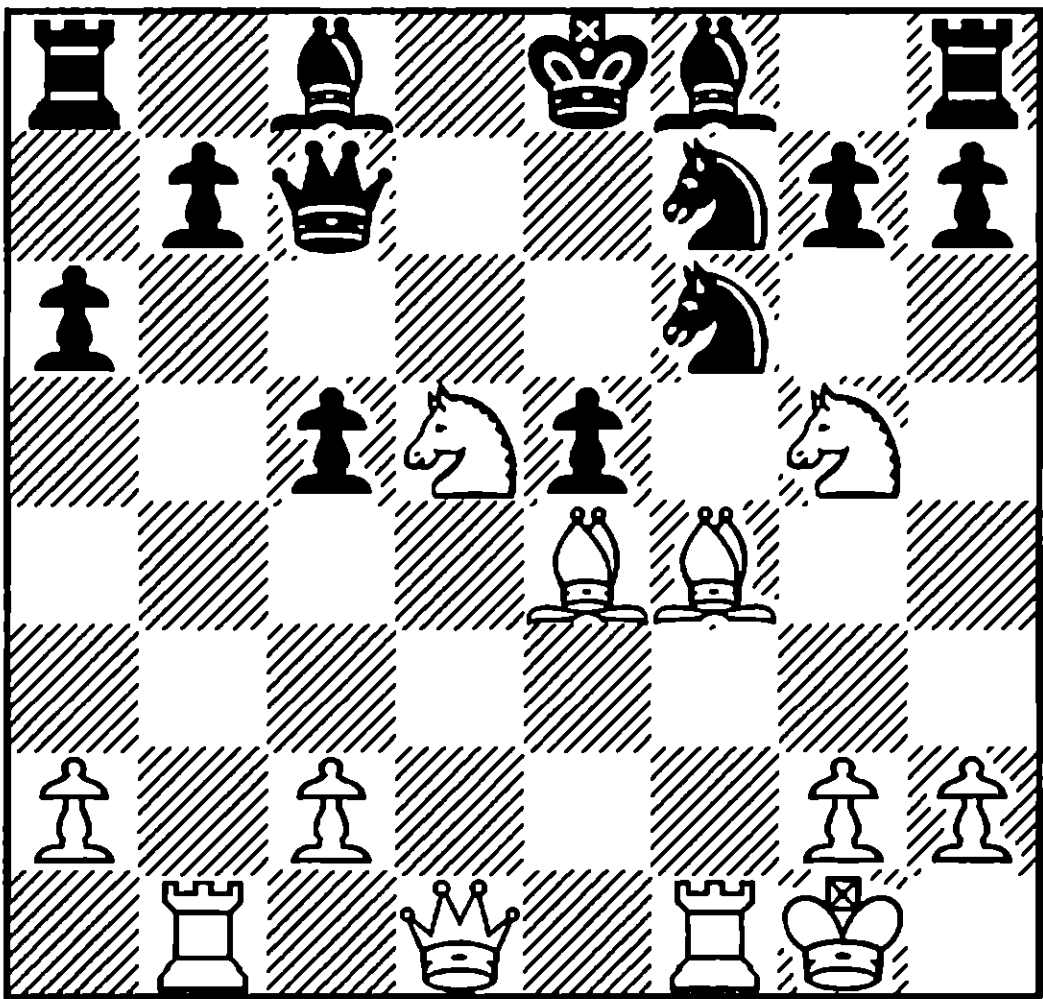
17 ♙f4

This really emphasizes the idea of activating pieces as part of the attack. White can dictate what is going on, whereas Black still has the majority of his pieces on their original squares.

17...e5

After 17...♙d6 White can continue in some style with 18 ♘xe6! ♙xe6 19 ♖xb7 ♗d8 20 ♙c6+ ♙f8 21 ♖xf7+ ♙xf7 22 ♙xd6 and White is on top.

18 ♘d5!



A stunning response; White ignores the threat to the bishop on f4 and embarks on a scheme to exchange the remaining defensive pieces so that he can steamroller in and deliver checkmate – a perfect example of the might of having a majority of pieces engaged in the onslaught.

18...♗d7

18...♘xd5 19 ♙xd5 ♘xg5 20 ♙xg5 shows up the poverty of Black’s play because there is no good defence to the

threat of ♙f7 winning the queen.

19 ♘xf7 ♙xf7

After 19...♗xf7 20 ♙xe5 the terrific pressure against Black’s king’s knight should prompt him to give up.

20 ♙xe5 ♙e7 21 ♗h5+! ♙g8

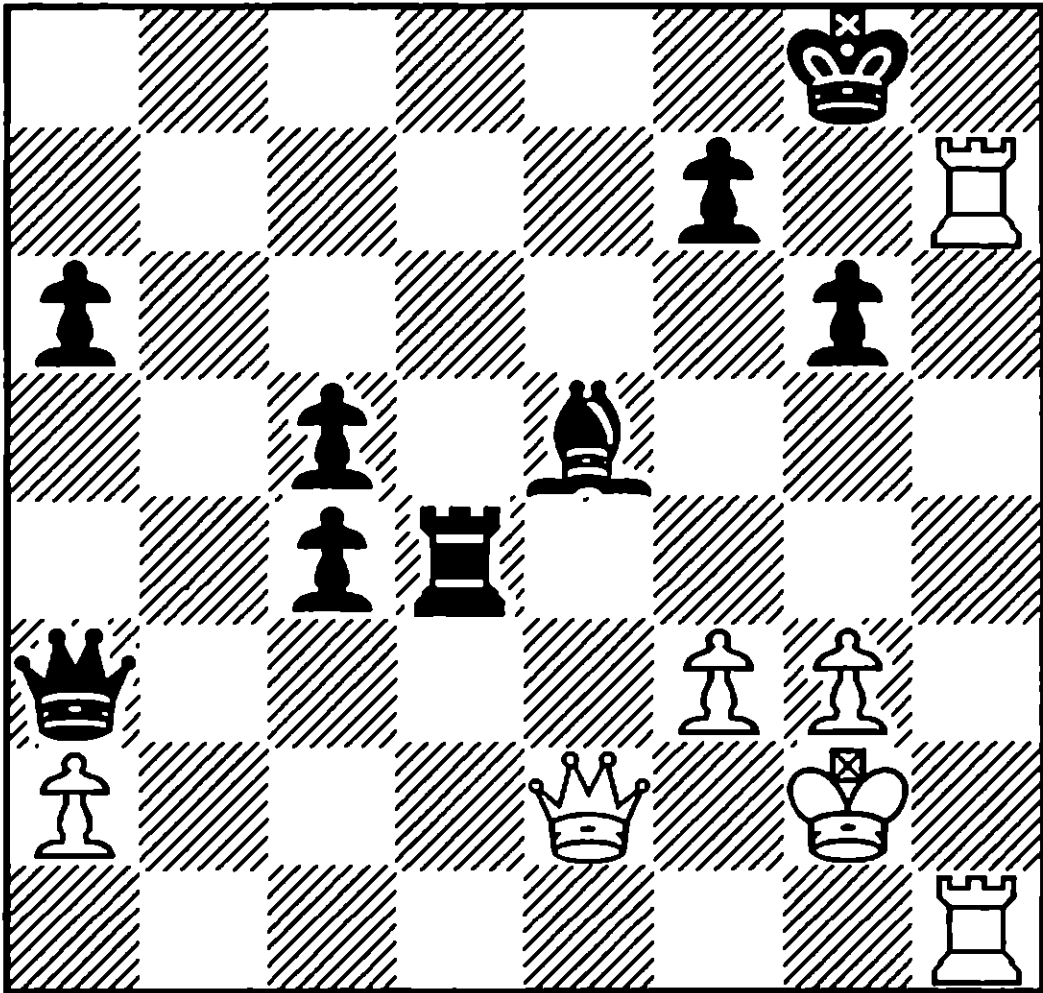
If 21...g6 then 22 ♗g5 will win a piece and the game.

22 ♙xf6 gxf6 23 ♖xf6! 1-0

“When you see a good move, wait and look for a better one.” – Emanuel Lasker.

In the next example Black tries to be too clever for his own good:

S.Karjakin-A.Shirov
World Rapid Cup,
Odessa 2010



Black to play

36...♗c3??

The idea is for White to take the bishop, after which ...♖d2+ reveals a

discovered attack on the queen. Instead, 36...♖a4 (covering the e8 square) is the right way to handle such a tense position, when White's best is to force a draw by 37 ♕xe5 ♖c2+ 38 ♔h3 ♕xh7 39 ♖e8 ♔g7 40 ♖e5+, leading to a peaceful conclusion.

37 ♖h8+! 1-0

A little magic appears on the board. White spots a forcing combination and suddenly has three pieces vs. one on the kingside with the black rook and queen acting as spectators. Black resigned due to 37...♔g7 (or 37...♙xh8 38 ♖e8+ ♔g7 39 ♖xh8 mate) 38 ♖xe5+ f6 39 ♖1h7 mate.

In the next game White steers her opponent away from standard lines into one laden with traps and eventually Black succumbs to the pressure.

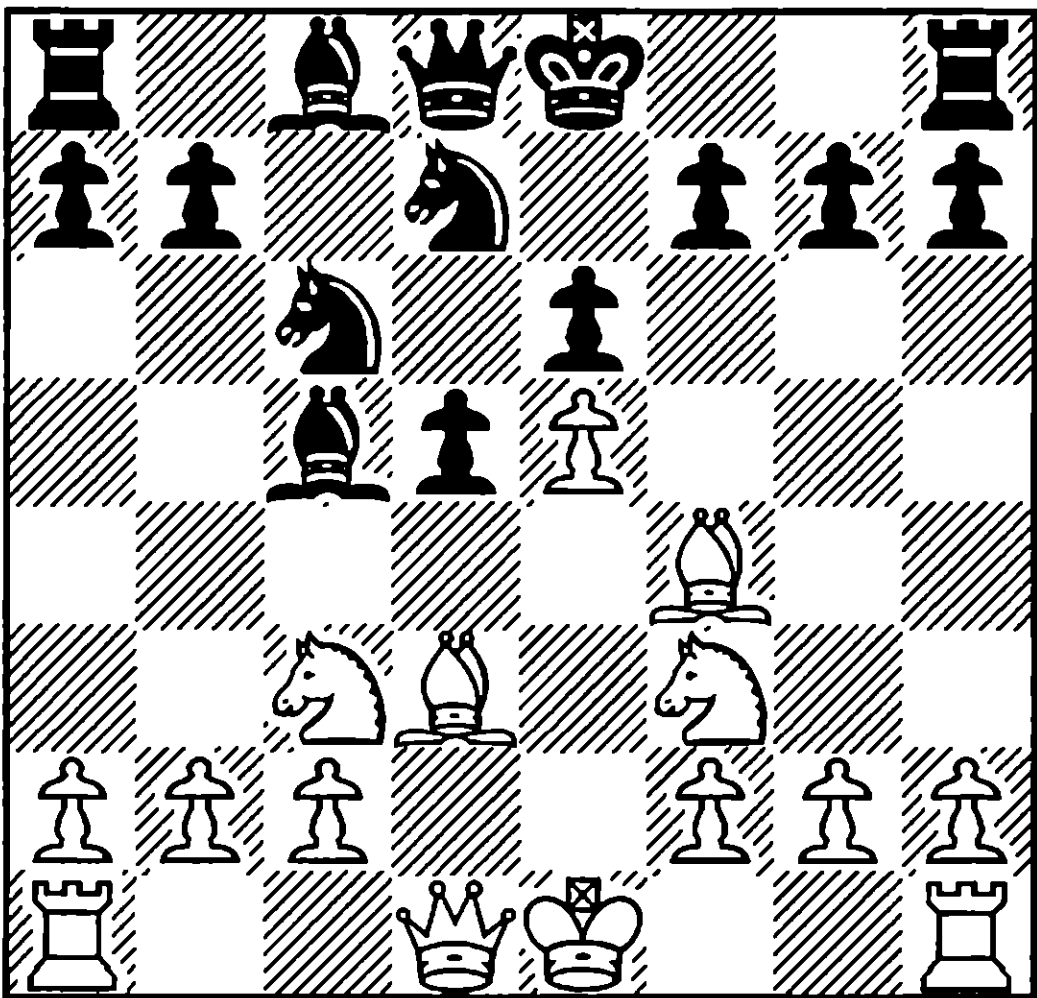
Game 9
S.Oliver-S.Dierckens
 World Junior
 Championships, Yerevan 2006
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 ♘f3 c5 6 dxc5

This sideline of the French has the merit of avoiding a lot of heavy duty main lines, and can still pack a punch against the unwary. It also avoided all of the Belgian's opening preparation. This is because, as her coach was not sure what lines Oliver played, he got it

into his head that she would play exactly the same ones as me, as I was her trainer at the tournament. As I tend to play 3 ♘d2, Black was nervous every move after 3 ♘c3!.

6...♘c6 7 ♙f4 ♙xc5 8 ♙d3



8...f6

This is an established idea as it makes sense to challenge the pawn on e5. There are various alternatives, a few of which allow White to win in the opening:

a) 8...0-0? (numerous players have walked into this trap – it seems to make sense to castle as soon as possible, especially if you are beyond your opening knowledge, but...) 9 ♙xh7+! ♔h8 (9...♔xh7 10 ♘g5+ ♔g6 11 ♖d3+ f5 12 ♖g3 is also good news for White, while 10...♔g8 11 ♖h5 ♖e8 12 ♖xf7+ ♔h8 13 ♖h5+ ♔g8 14 ♖h7+ ♔f8 15 ♖h8+ ♔e7 16 ♖xg7 is mate) 10 ♙d3 g6 11 ♖d2 and White had a comfortable advantage in S.Oliver-V.Reid, Auckland Zonal 2005, thanks to her extra pawn and the vulnerable black king.

b) 8...♖b6 9 0-0 and now:

b1) 9...♖xb2? 10 ♜b5! (the knight does an excellent job of trapping the black queen and threatening a match-winning fork on c7) 10...0-0 11 ♔d2 (the standard Greek sacrifice with 11 ♔xh7+! again looks strong, when 11...♔xh7 12 ♞g5+ ♔g6 13 ♚d3+ f5 14 exf6+ ♔xf6 15 ♖fb1 is deadly) 11...d4 12 ♚e2 and 1-0 in O.Gutierrez Castillo-J.Oliver Font, Palma de Mallorca 2009, since 13 ♖fb1 will win the queen.

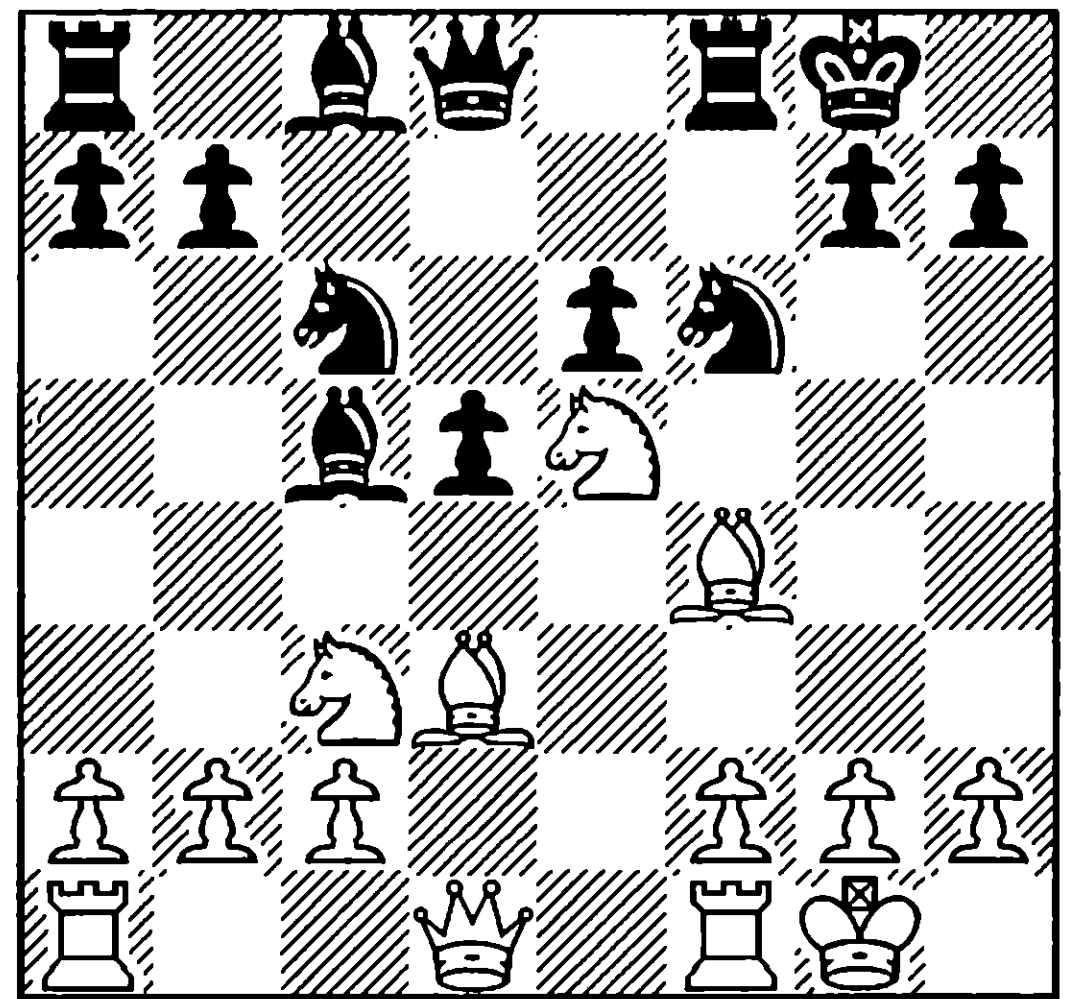
b2) 9...♙e7 10 ♚e2 a6 11 ♖ab1 ♚c7 12 ♔g3 h5?! 13 ♞xd5! (again producing tactics in the opening) 13...exd5 14 e6 ♚b6 15 exd7+ ♔xd7 gave Black a poor position in S.Oliver-G.Anuruddha, New Delhi 2007, because after 16 ♖fe1 it is not safe to castle on either side of the board.

c) 8...a6 has a few supporters, although in I.Rogers-Ton That Nhu Tung, Kuala Lumpur 2006, White soon took control: 9 0-0 b5 10 ♖e1 (it could be argued that this position is equal) 10...♚b6 11 ♚e2 ♞d4 12 ♞xd4 ♔xd4 13 ♞d1 (a well-known retreat in this line, to oust the enemy piece on d4) 13...♔b7 14 c3 ♔c5 15 b4 (maybe 15 ♚g4 is better, when 15...g6 16 ♔h6 gives White an edge) 15...♙e7 16 ♔e3 ♚c7 17 ♔d4 ♞b6 18 ♞e3 ♖d8 19 ♚g4 g6 20 ♚h3 ♞c4 21 ♞g4 h5 22 ♞f6+ ♔xf6 23 exf6 ♚f4? (the losing move; 23...♔c8 was necessary) 24 ♖xe6+! ♔f8 25 ♖e7 ♔c8 26 ♚g3 1-0.

9 exf6 ♞xf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♞e5

I like this idea of the knight going to e5 because Black has to be careful not to

walk into any tactics and it is also a good positional continuation.



11 ♚e2 has also been tried, to stamp control over the e5-square and stop Black from contemplating the advance of his e-pawn. Then 11...♞b4 12 ♖ae1 ♞h5 13 ♔g5 ♔e7 14 ♞e5 ♔xg5 15 ♚xh5 ♞xd3 16 cxd3 led to equal play in T.Willemze-M.Clijssen, Tilburg 2006. Once again, it is a matter of taste.

11...♞xe5

Black decides to exchange the influential knight. Others:

a) 11...♞e4?! (a classic mistake that occurs quite frequently) 12 ♔xe4 ♖xf4 13 ♞d3! (this is always the move that Black missed in his calculations) 13...♚f8 14 ♞xf4 ♚xf4 15 ♔xd5 with a big advantage, M.Chandler-T.Rrhious, Gibraltar 2004.

b) 11...a6 12 ♚e2 ♚e8 13 ♞xc6 ♚xc6 14 ♔e5 with roughly equal play.

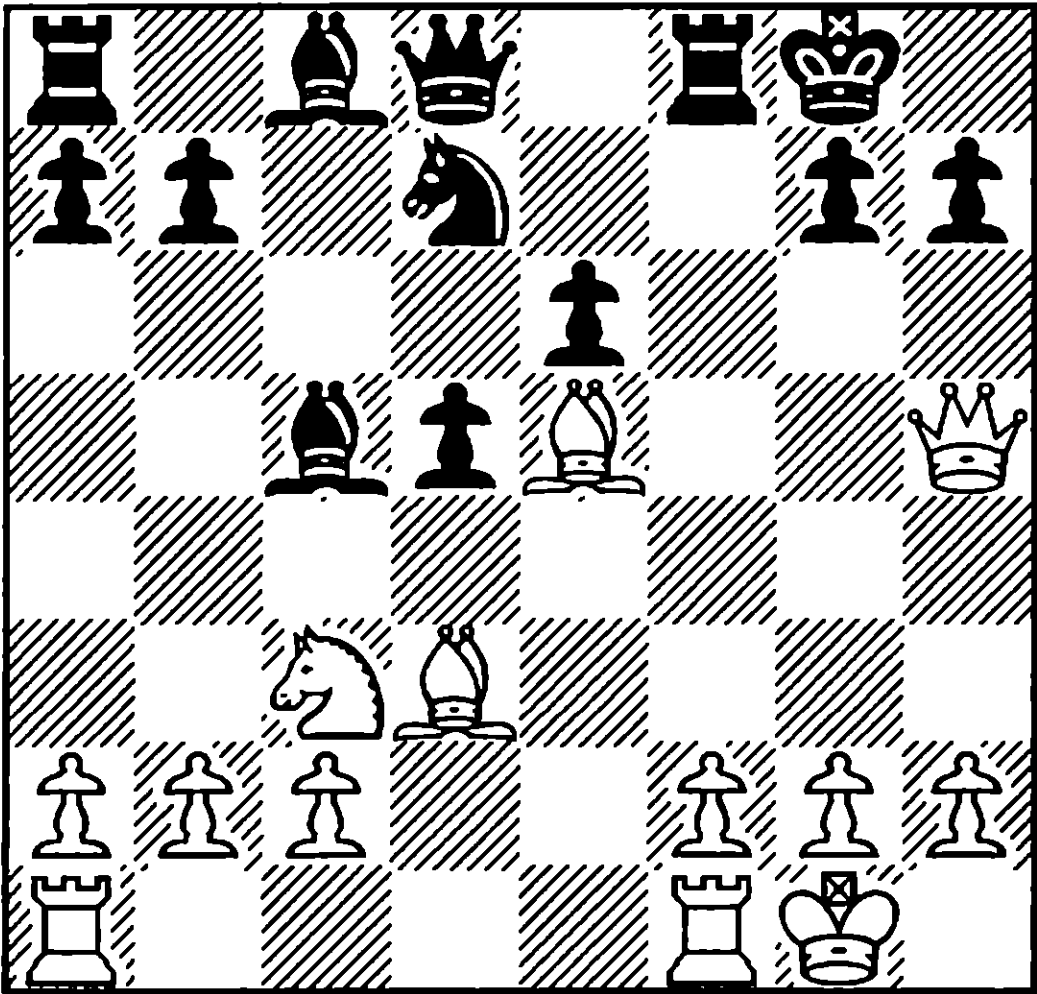
c) 11...♔d7 12 a3 (White prevents a knight hopping on to the b4-square; 12 h3 d4 13 ♞e2 ♞d5 14 ♔g3 was roughly equal in S.Oliver-E.Schon, Brisbane

2006) 12...a6 13 ♖d2 ♗c4 14 ♗g5 ♖e8 15 ♖a6 ♗xe5 16 ♖xe5 ♗d6 17 ♖ee1 ♗f4 18 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 19 ♖e2 ♗f7 20 ♗f3 ♗d2? (20...g6 is fine for Black) 21 ♗xh7+ ♗xh7 22 ♖d3+ g6 23 ♖xd2 ♗g7 24 ♖e3 ♗f4? 25 ♗xd5! 1-0 P.Stimpson-
 W.Dilleigh, British League 2005.

12 ♗xe5 ♗d7?

A logical move by the Belgian international to get rid of the dark-squared bishop, but it receives a fierce reply.

13 ♗h5!



It is time to count the pieces: the addition of the queen to the pair of bishops lined up against the king means Black is in trouble.

13...h6

An obvious way to meet the threat to h7, safe in the knowledge that 14 ♗g6 is refuted by 14...♗xe5. Nevertheless, 13...g6 is the best chance in the circumstances, when 14 ♗xg6! is met by 14...♖e7, so that after 15 ♗d3 ♗xe5 16 ♖xe5 White is a pawn up but Black

avoids an immediate disaster.

14 ♗xg7!

The flimsy black pawn shelter is shattered and White has a crushing position.

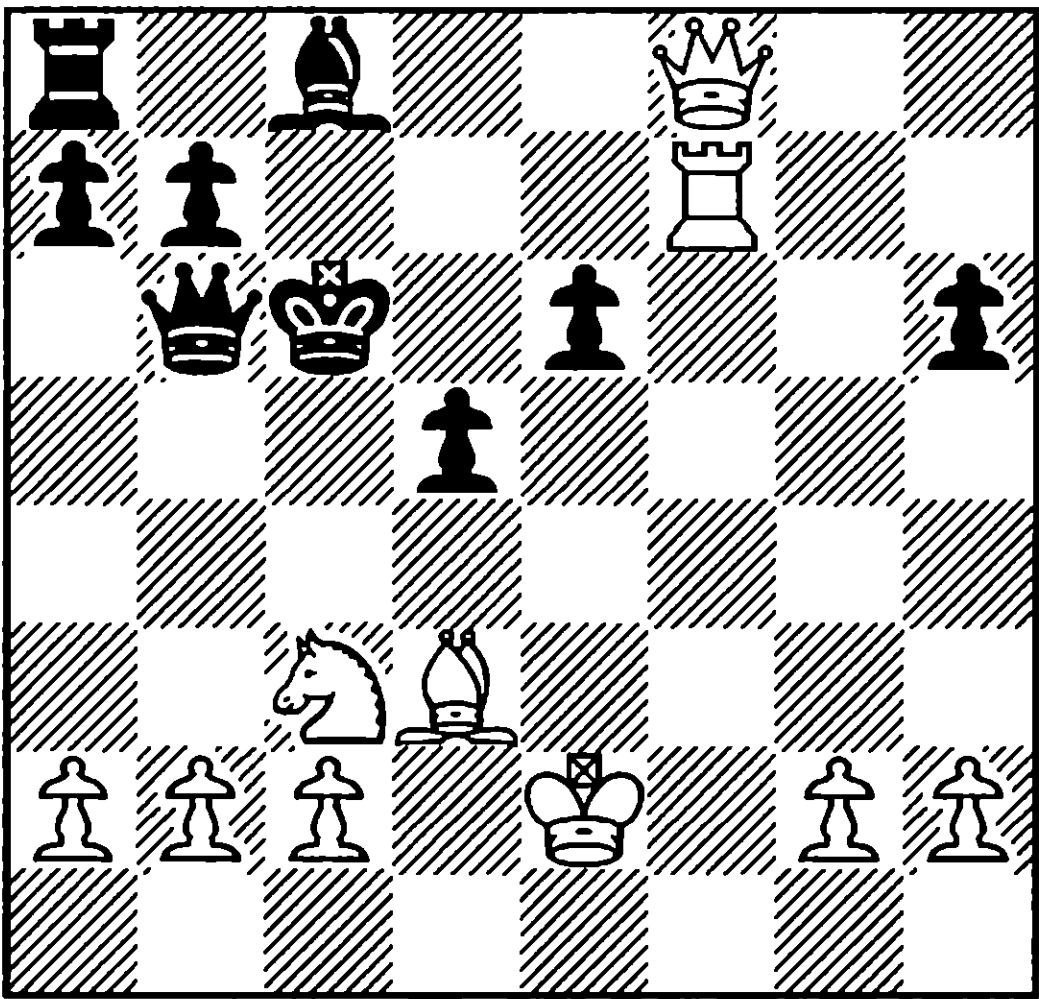
14...♖xf2

Of course 14...♗xg7 runs into 15 ♖g6+ ♗h8 16 ♖h7 mate.

15 ♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 16 ♗xf2 ♖b6+ 17 ♗e2 ♗xg7 18 ♖f1!

Cutting off the king's escape path is the quickest way to force mate.

18...♗f6 19 ♖g6+ ♗f8 20 ♖xf6+ ♗e8 21 ♖f8+ ♗d7 22 ♖f7+ ♗c6



More evidence that a king hunt is only fun for the person attacking. Black is only carrying on because she can't quite believe that she been completely lost since move 13.

23 ♗b5+ ♖xb5+ 24 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 25 ♖c7 1-0

"All I want to do, ever, is play chess."
 – Bobby Fischer.

Chapter Two

Carry on Attacking

“Chess laws are ruled by logic and only if the beginning of the game is irreproachable can other phases of the game create from it a beautiful, perfect whole.” – Svetozar Gligoric.

Using the *count the pieces* formula to make an instant assessment of the position works well when attacking a king stuck in the centre or when both kings have castled on the same side. However, an attack on an opposite-castled position requires a more subtle response because much usually depends on advancing pawns to help the attack. The difference is that if both sides have castled on the same side a pawn advance in front of the king will be swiftly met, in time-honoured fashion, by opening the centre as a way to exploit the exposed king. When players have castled on opposite sides a slightly different approach is required; here are some guidelines that can be successfully applied in such circumstances:

1. A pawn attack rewards the person who gains the initiative.

This is because, as soon as the advance of pawns looks threatening, the defender must abandon his own plans of counter-attack to cope with the onslaught.

2. Can the pawn storm be easily stopped?

There is no point blindly advancing the pawns only for them to be blocked and picked off one by one. If the opponent can easily anticipate an advance of pawns and halt them, the result may well be a dour defensive task in looking after the extended pawn chain.

3. When advancing your pawns be ready to take time out to make some defensive moves.

It is all very well to listen to stories that pawn storms are a race against time, but you often need to take a more realistic approach. If you can see a way to defend which will delay your oppo-

ment's own attack for some time then be practical and go for it.

4. Avoid boom or bust.

Be careful in an all-out attack that you don't get carried away and make drastic changes, such as sacrificing a piece, merely in the hope that you might get lucky. If it fails, you lose. A more thoughtful approach is required, relying on calculation and some positional judgement.

5. Watch the clock.

Remember that a perfect attacking strategy is not much use if you are down to the last two minutes and can't follow it through. So speed up – and then others won't have to listen to the familiar story “I was winning ... but lost on time.”

Game 10

V.Anand-K.Ninov

World Junior Championships,

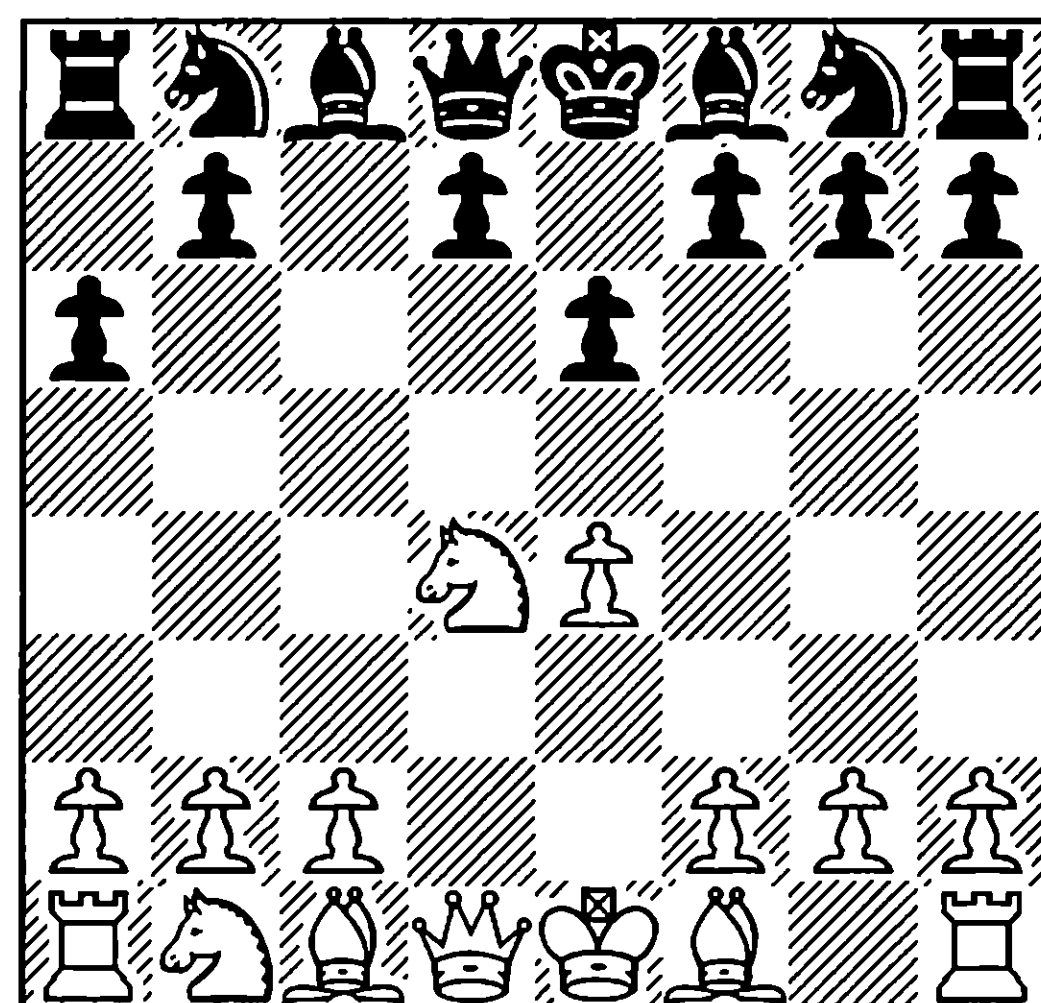
Baguio City 1987

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 a6

This is known as the Kan Variation after the Russian IM, Ilya Kan (1909-78) and is one of the most popular lines of the Sicilian. At a basic level it prevents White playing ♘b5 and prepares a queenside pawn advance with ...b7-b5. Nowadays it is renowned for being a flexible choice because, by delaying the

development of his pieces, Black keeps his options open depending how White responds.



5 ♖d3 ♖c5 6 ♘b3 ♖a7 7 ♘c3 ♘c6 8 ♔e2

The queen is moved to prepare queenside castling and, more importantly, ♖c1-e3 so that if the bishops are exchanged on that square the queen can take back and avoid doubling the e-pawns.

8...d6 9 ♖e3 ♖xe3

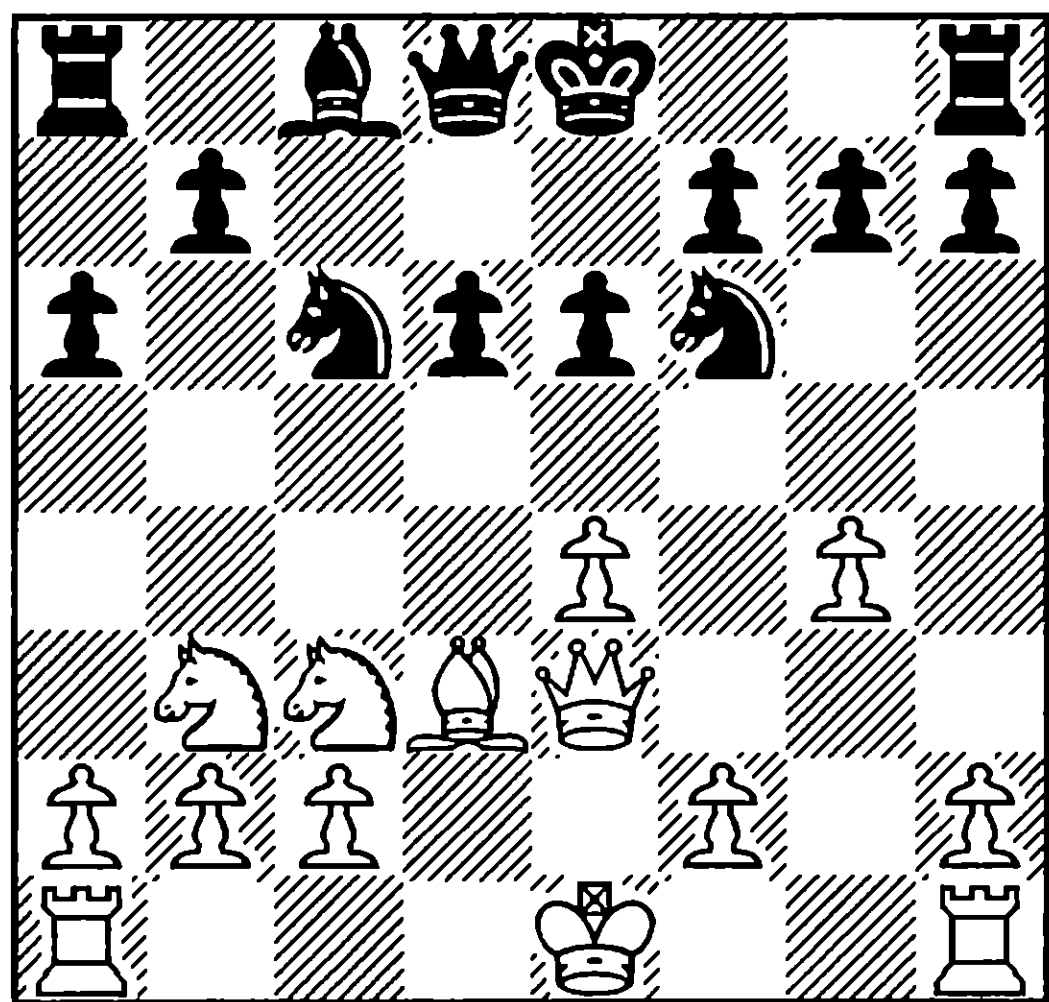
I have taken on others in this position and the resulting positions from the opening are encouraging:

a) 9...♘f6 10 f4 (10 0-0-0 is a reasonable option to keep Black guessing as to the true intentions of the bishop on e3) 10...0-0 11 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 12 0-0-0 e5 13 f5 b5 14 g4 with a doubled-edged position, G.Lane-G.Nakauchi, Sydney 2010.

b) 9...♘ge7 10 f4 0-0 11 0-0 b5 12 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 13 a3!? (maybe 13 ♔e3 is the right way to proceed, keeping an eye on a7-rook, and if 13...b4 then 14 ♘a4 is strong with the knight heading

for the b6-square) 13...f6 14 ♖h1 ♜g6 15 ♜ad1 ♜b6 16 ♜h5 ♜ce7 17 ♜e2 ♜d8 18 ♜f3 with a promising attack, G.Lane-R.Smith, Fiji 2007.

10 ♜xe3 ♞f6 11 g4!?



At the time this was a new idea because people tended to play 11 0-0-0 and, after 11...0-0, 12 ♜hg1 and only then g2-g4. Anand's idea is based on avoiding using a move to support the g-pawn, so in other words no ♜hg1. This logic is connected with the general rule already outlined that *a pawn attack rewards the person who gains the initiative*. One could also argue that it is not really a pawn sacrifice because 11...♞xg4 can be met by 12 ♜g3 ♞f6 13 ♜xg7 ♜g8 14 ♜h6, intending to castle queenside with a slight edge.

Anand adds a comment about this position that reveals another intriguing general rule. In his collection of best games he writes: "when Black castles queenside in the Sicilian, White is better unless there is some mitigating factor, which is not the case here. Indeed, after ♜e3 by White there is an

awkward weakness on b6 and the d6 pawn itself may become vulnerable later."

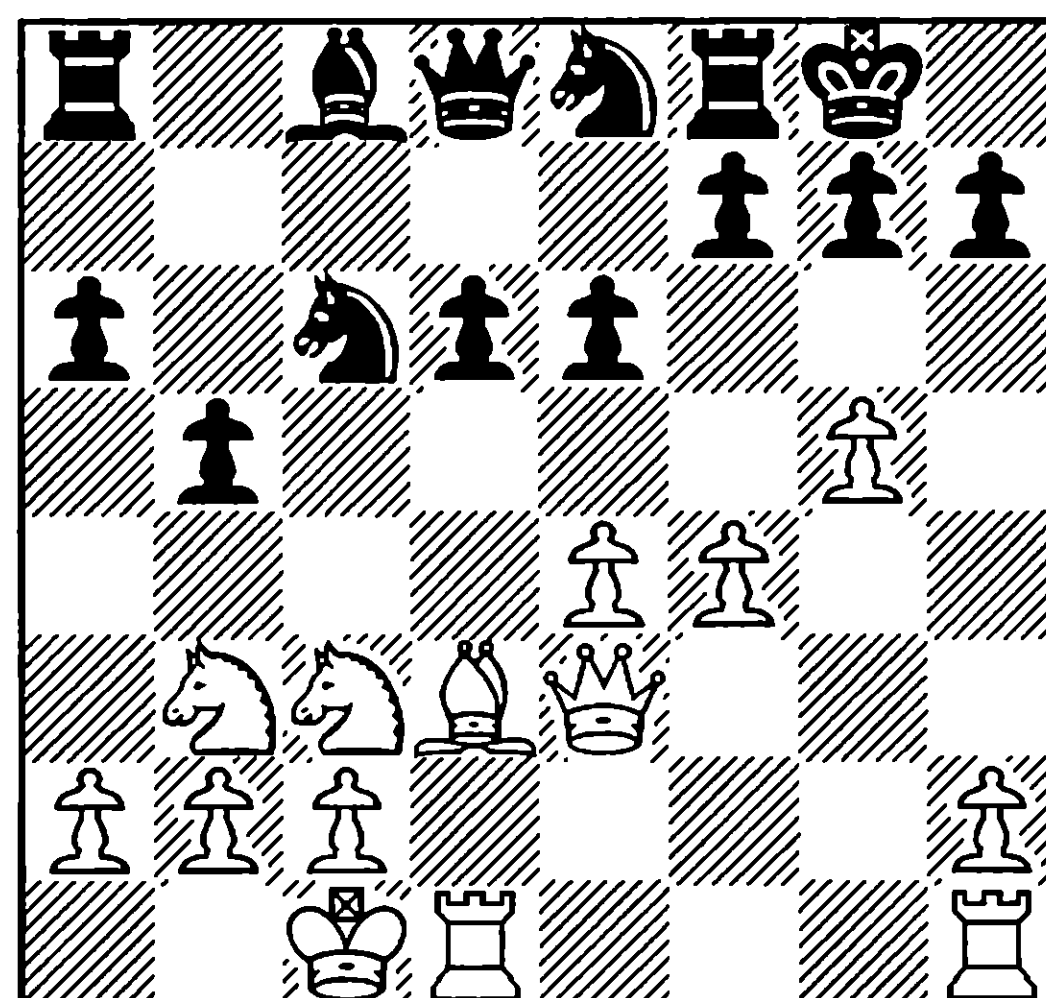
11...b5

Black starts his counterplay on the queenside. In M.Kislov-L.Voloshin, Polanica Zdroj 1995, where Black tried 11...0-0, White imitated Anand's attacking style to gain the upper hand: 12 g5 ♞d7 13 f4 b5 14 0-0-0 ♜c7 15 ♜b1 (I reckon 15 ♜h3! threatening e4-e5 is strong, and if 15...e5, then 16 ♞d5 ♜d8 17 ♜h4 waiting to play f4-f5 with a dangerous initiative) 15...♞b6 16 ♞d4 with an edge.

12 0-0-0 0-0 13 g5 ♞e8

The knight retreats but now it gets in the way of the other pieces. Instead, after 13...♞d7 White can try 14 ♜e2 with ambitions to take on d6. In the Sicilian White does not always go after the d6-pawn because it can be a time-consuming business that would delay the attack. In this case it is worth pursuing because the counter-attack by Black is sluggish.

14 f4

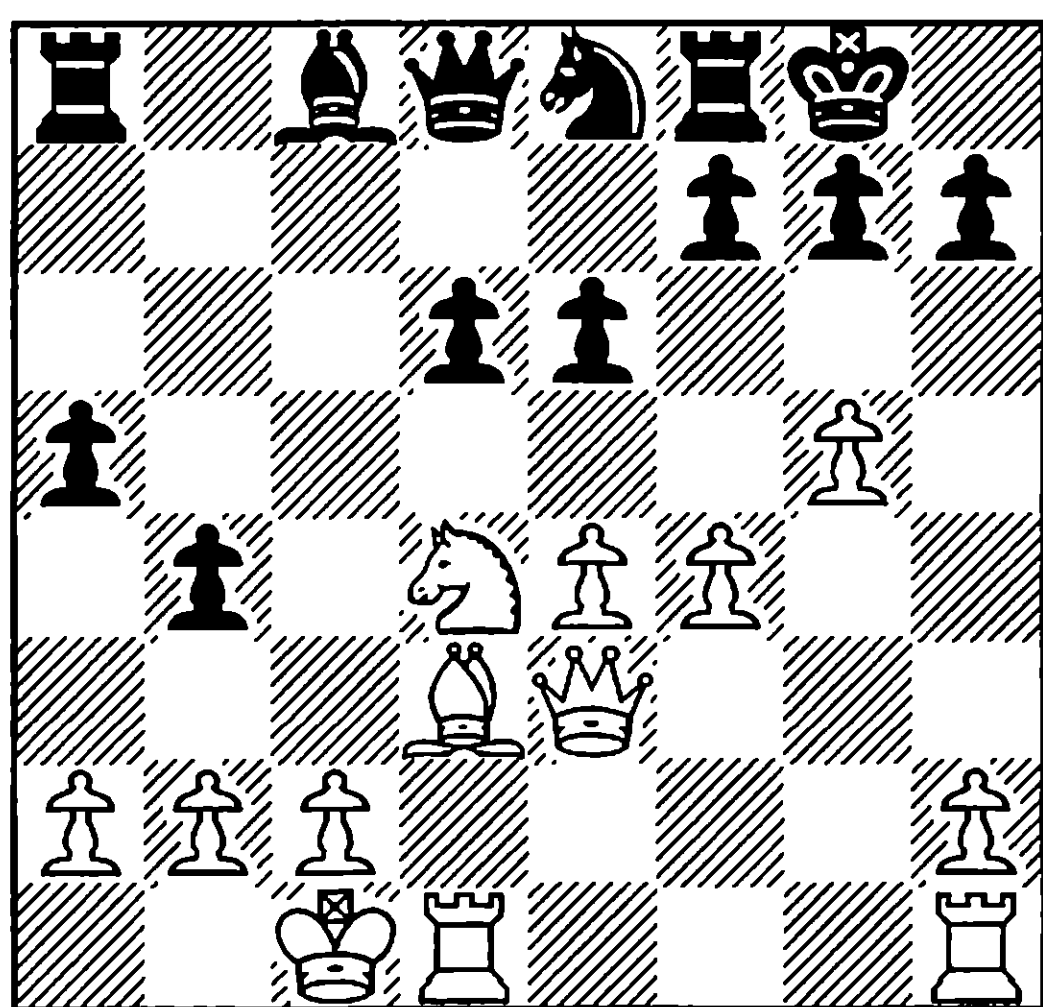


Anand maintains the initiative by pursuing a strategy of attack based on f4-f5 or, depending what happens in the position, e4-e5 to unleash the light-squared bishop against the pawn on h7. White could have tried ♖hg1 to support the pawn storm, but that would have undermined the success of the innovation on move 11. If White had plenty of time then a traditional way to continue the onslaught might have been h4-h5 aided by ♙dg1.

14...b4 15 ♘e2

White is confident about his attacking chances but did consider the more positional approach with 15 ♘a4. This conforms to the general rule of “*can the pawn storm be easily stopped?*” and certainly puts a halt to the advance ...a5-a4. The knight can then be extracted by e4-e5, removing the d6-pawn, to allow the c5-square to be occupied.

15...a5 16 ♘bd4 ♘xd4 17 ♘xd4



Anand has the advantage because he is better placed to carry on attacking. An obvious problem for Black is

that in normal Sicilian lines the queen-side pawns hurtle down the board and gain time by threatening a knight on c3 or even a piece on b3; in this case it does not apply. Also, a knight on f6 can be useful in facilitating a timely ...d6-d5 or threatening the pawn on e4, whereas on e8 it merely gets in the way.

17...♙b6?!

The queen lends supports to the b-pawn in preparation for the further advance of the a-pawn. Instead, the obvious try is 17...a4 and it might be best. For instance: 18 ♘c6 ♙c7 19 ♘xb4 a3 (otherwise White will play a2-a3 to stop Black's progress on the queenside and confirm another general rule: *when advancing your pawns be ready to take time out to make some defensive moves*) 20 b3, intending ♙d4 with the advantage if given the chance, and now:

a) 20...♙c3 21 ♙e1! ♙a1+ (21...♙c5 22 c3 favours White because his defence is robust) 22 ♙d2 ♙b2 23 ♙f2 and surprisingly, despite the presence of the queen, Black's attack is floundering, leaving White enough time to carry on with his kingside operations, ensuring a big plus.

b) After 20...♙b8 Anand recommends 21 ♘a6 ♙xa6 22 ♙xa6 followed by ♙c4 with a solid position, but strangely it completely overlooks 21...♙b6! which traps the knight (the threat to the rook on b8 can be safely ignored with the white queen unpro-

tected). Therefore, I think 21 ♔d2 is required to shore up the defence with the better chances.

18 e5!

The bishop on d3 now looks more than useful in its role of attacking the h7-pawn, which once again helps to maintain the attacking initiative.

18...♙b7 19 ♖hf1!

The rook gets out of the way of danger and lines up to support the advance f4-f5.

19...dxe5

Ninov takes it upon himself to stop f4-f5 by exchanging pawns. One can see why by looking at the alternatives:

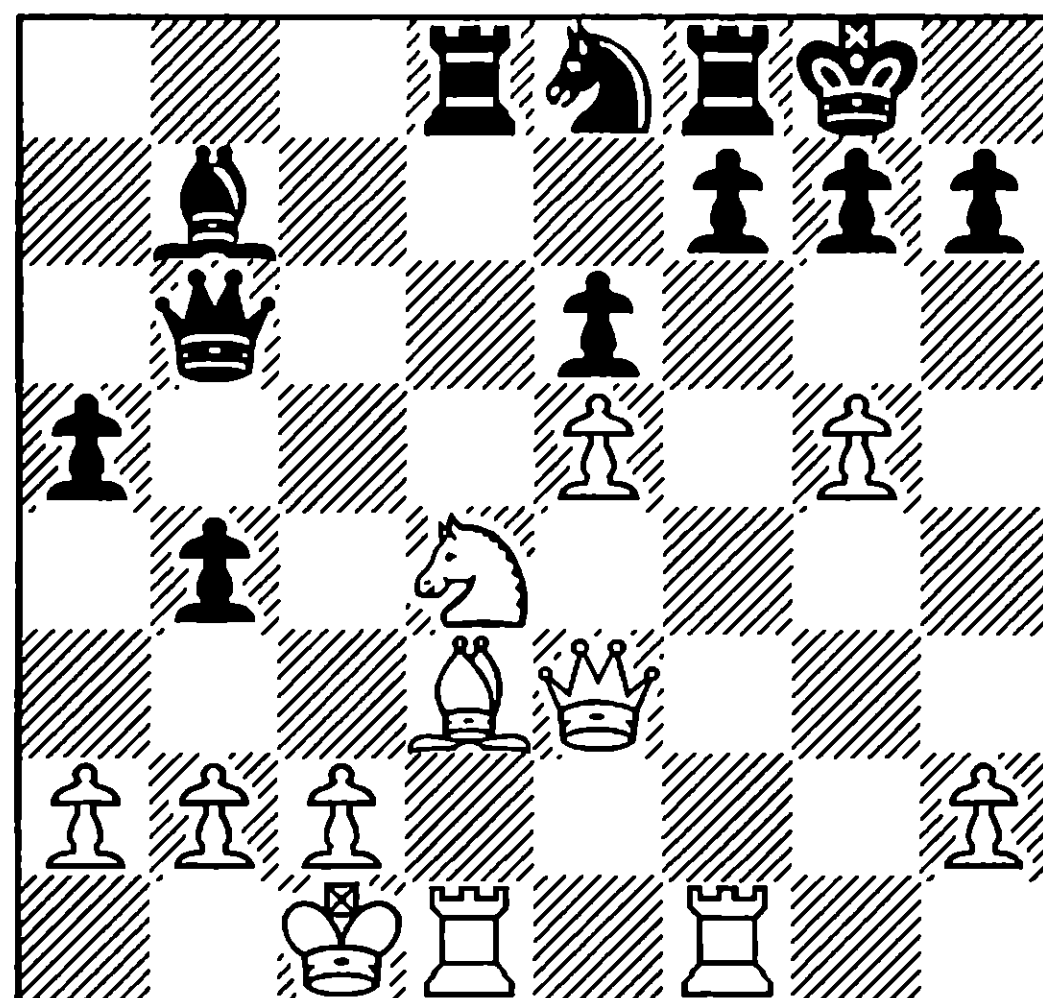
a) 19...a4 20 f5! dxe5 (or 20...exf5 runs into 21 e6! ♘c7 22 exf7+ ♖xf7 23 ♙xf5 with the superior chances) 21 fxe6! exd4 22 ♔h3 g6 (or 22...f5 23 ♖xf5 h6 24 e7 and White will win) 23 exf7+ ♖xf7 24 ♖xf7 ♙xf7 25 ♔xh7+ ♙e6 26 ♔xg6+ ♙d7 27 ♔xb6 and Black can resign.

b) 19...♖d8 20 ♔h3 g6 21 f5! exf5 (21...♔xd4 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 ♙xg6 ♔xd1+ 24 ♙xd1 fxg6 25 ♔xe6+ forces mate, and 21...dxe5 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 ♙xg6 fxg6 24 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 25 ♘xe6+ wins) 22 ♘xf5 gxf5 23 ♙xf5 leads to an overwhelming position for White.

20 fxe5 ♖d8?

Black is keen to slow down White's attack and so targets the knight, but fails to spot a crafty combination. The safety first approach with 20...g6 is required, when Anand considered 21 ♘f5 with the view that the endgame was in

his favour. 21 ♙e4 ♙xe4 22 ♔xe4 ♙c7 / 23 ♖d3 is also worth investigating.



21 ♙xh7+! ♙xh7 22 g6+

A lovely move that takes advantage of the f-file pin – all made possible by the knight on e8 interfering with the co-ordination of the black rooks.

22...♙g8

Alternatively:

a) 22...♙xg6 23 ♔d3+ ♙h6 24 ♔h3+ ♙g5 25 ♖g1+ ♙f4 26 ♖de1 with mate to follow.

b) 22...fxg6 23 ♖xf8 (threatening ♔h3 mate) 23...♙g2 24 ♔f2 and the black position collapses.

23 ♔h3

The threat of mate on h7 does tend to concentrate the mind, but for Black there is no way out.

23...♘f6




















Or 23...fxg6 24 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 25 ♘xe6+ ♙e7 26 ♘d8 and White wins.

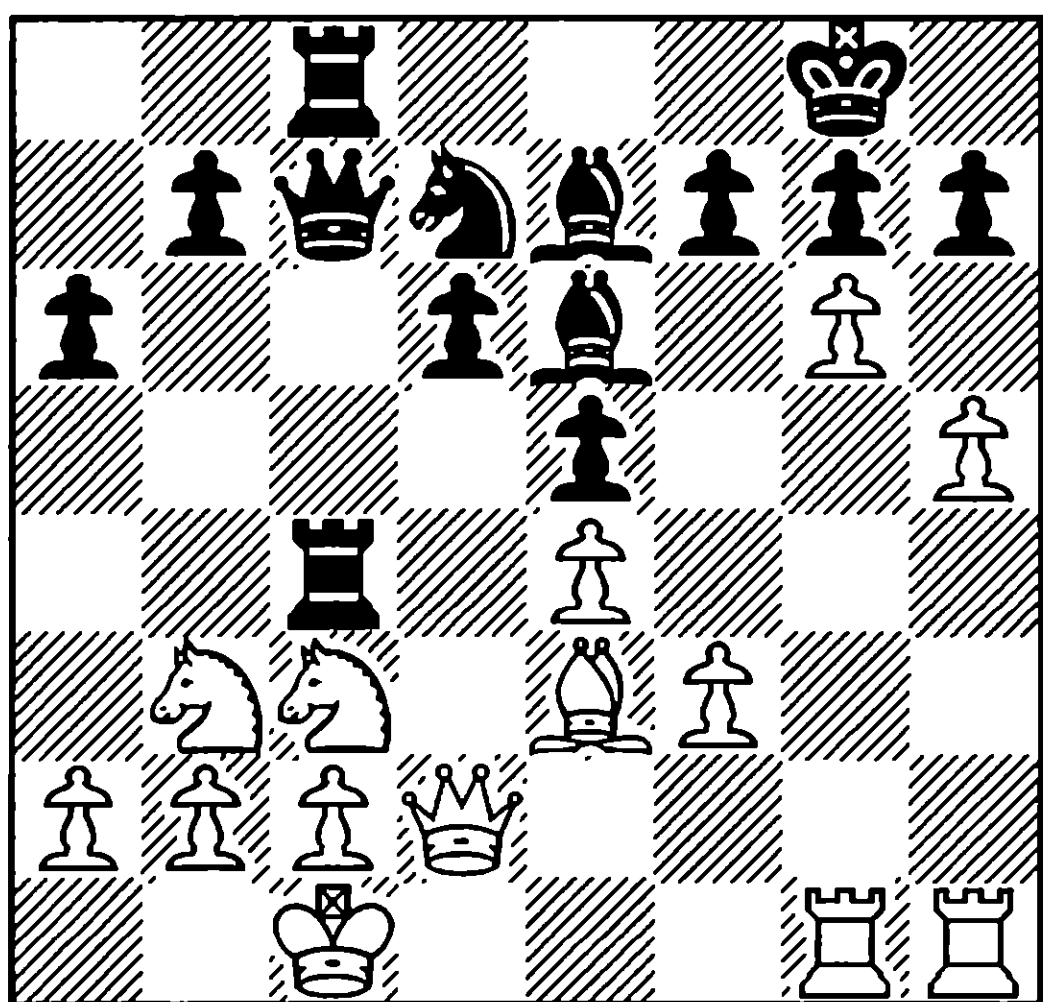
24 exf6 fxg6 25 fxg7 1-0

In view of 25...♙xg7 (or 25...♖xf1 26 ♔h8+ ♙f7 27 ♖xf1+ ♙e7 28 ♔f8+ winning) 26 ♘xe6+ ♙g8 27 ♘xf8 and Black has a hopeless position.

In the next game White achieves all that he wants by advancing his king-side pawns and adds his rooks to the onslaught. These factors simply increase your tactical chances, so that there should often be a breakthrough possible:

Game 11
A.Adorjan-Z.Ribli
Budapest 1979
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 xd4 f6
5 c3 a6 6 e3 e5 7 b3 e6 8 d2
bd7 9 f3 c8 10 g4 e7 11 0-0-0 b6
12 h4 0-0 13 h5 c4 14 xc4 xc4 15
g5 d7 16 dg1 c7 17 g6 c8



18 ♖h6!!

White adds another piece to the attack and is more than happy for Black to take it, as that would multiply the attacking threats.

18...♙f6

Black has defend the g-pawn, otherwise White will get the chance to

play 19 gxf7+ ♕xf7 20 ♖xg7+ ♕h8 21 ♖gg1!, threatening ♕g7+ when ...♕h7 is met by ♖h6+. Other moves:

a) 18...gxf6 19 ♔xf6 is overwhelming for Black who is struggling just to find a way to prolong the game:
19...fxg6 20 hxf6 ♙f6 21 ♔xf7+ ♚f8 22 g7+ with a massive advantage.

b) 18...fxg6 19 hxg6 hxg6 20 ♖xg6
 ♙f6 21 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 22 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 23
 ♚g5+ ♔f8 24 ♖h8+ ♔f7 25 ♖h7+ ♔f8
 26 ♚e7+ ♔g8 27 ♚g7 mate.

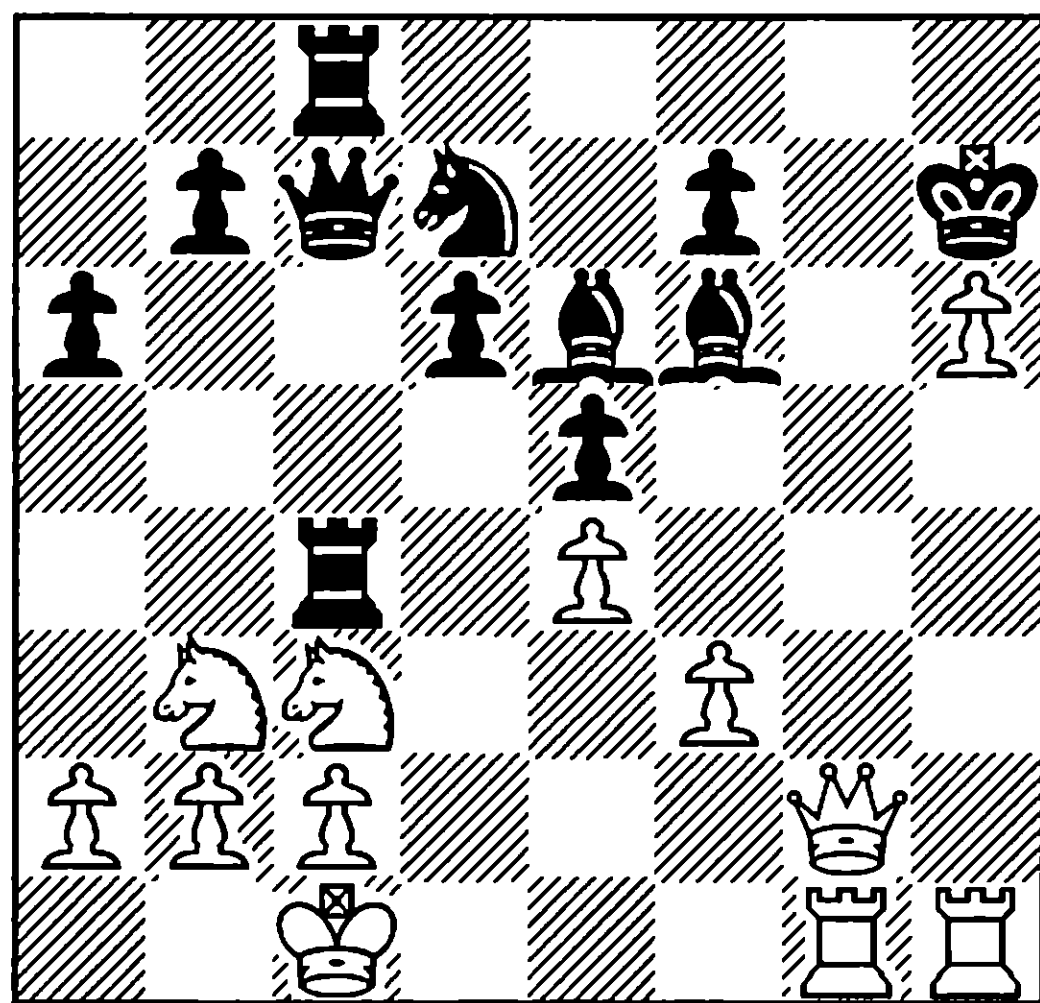
19 gxf7+ ♔xf7 20 ♖xg7!

Once again the Hungarian gives the bishop away to open more lines of attack.

20...♖xg7 21 h6 ♖f6

21...♖h8 leads to a lovely mate after
22 ♖g7+! ♗xg7 23 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 24
♕q5+ ♔f8 25 ♖h8.

22 ♔g2! 1-0



Black resigned in view of the astonishing 23 ♔g7+ which will lead to mate. For example: 22...♖xc3 23 ♔g7+ ♘xg7 24 hxg7+ ♕g8 25 ♖h8 mate.

“Adorjan himself looked like an aq-

ing rock star, spiky hair and beard covering an impish but tired face.” – Sarah Hurst writing in *Curse of Kirsan* (2002).

The Sicilian is double-edged to the extent that Black can also pull off fabulous victories. As usual a deciding factor is who gains the initiative while advancing their pawns in search of an attack.

Game 12
G. Coratella-L. Trent
Porto San Giorgio 2006
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6

This is the move that real Dragon players use to enter their beloved variation. The alternative 2...♘c6 allows White to employ another system against the Dragon set-up: 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 g6 5 c4 ♙g7 6 ♙e3 ♘f6 7 ♘c3, when the move c2-c4 proves to be an effective way of clamping down on the pawn break ...d6-d5. This is known as the Maróczy Bind and traditionally Black needs a patient approach to make progress, rather than the usual wild counter-attacks associated with the mainline Dragon.

3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 g6 6 ♙e3 ♙g7

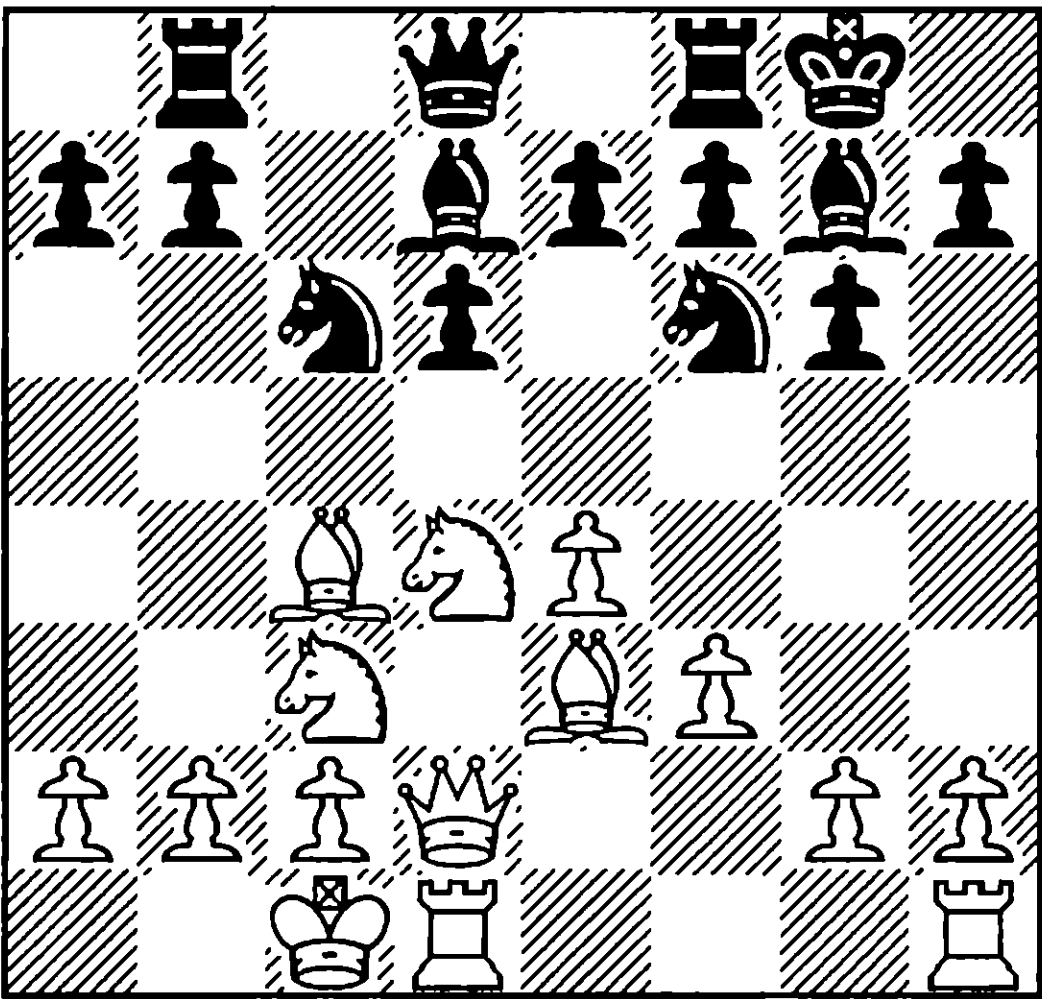
Plenty of inexperienced Dragon players have tested 6...♘g4? only to find they failed their opening exam after 7 ♙b5+! which wins material:

7...♙d7 (7...♘c6 8 ♘xc6 bxc6 9 ♙xc6 ♙d7 10 ♙xa8 ♙xa8 11 ♙d4 e5 12 ♘d5! is very good news for White) 8 ♙xg4 and now it becomes obvious to Black that the bishop on d7 is pinned by the bishop on b5.

7 f3 0-0 8 ♙d2 ♘c6 9 ♙c4

This is known as the 9 ♙c4 Yugoslav Attack if you want to look it up in the books, but be warned: it involves learning a lot of variations if you want to play it at a decent level. It is a great opening if you want to prepare to attack – just make sure you know the latest moves whether you are White or Black to avoid an opening crisis due to memory loss.

9...♙d7 10 0-0-0 ♖b8



This move signals the Chinese Dragon. Basically the idea is to play ...b7-b5 in the right circumstances, while the knight on c6 will go to c4 via the a5 or e5-squares. Then, if the knight is exchanged on c4, the queen's rook is handily placed to exert pressure on the b-file.

11 ♘de2?!

White understandably has no wish to test an international master in a line of the Dragon where knowledge will be important. However, this really is a weak alternative because it makes it easier for Black to utilize his bishop on g7 with the long diagonal no longer being obstructed by a piece on d4.

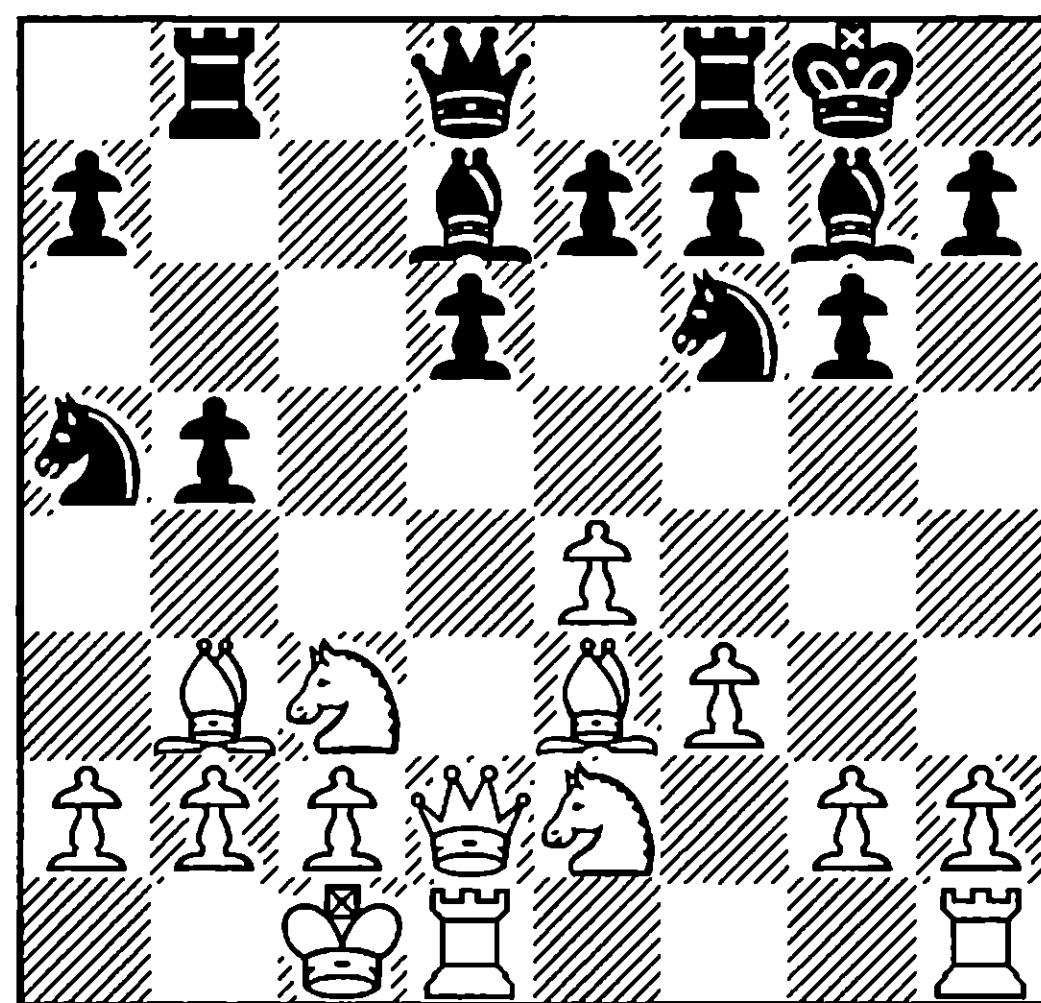
Instead, 11 ♖b3 (11 h4 and 11 ♔b1 are the main alternatives) 11...♞a5 12 h4 b5 13 ♔b1 ♞c4 14 ♙xc4 bxc4 (as noted above, the exchange on c4 has enabled Black to open up the b-file so his rook can put pressure on the b2-pawn) 15 g4 ♚b6 (Black threatens mate and it is suddenly clear that he has the initiative since White has to take evasive action) 16 ♚c1?! (I prefer 16 b3 because the queen on c1 is too passive and in some lines even gets in the way of the king, preventing it from fleeing to the kingside) 16...♚a5 17 ♔a1 ♜b6 18 ♞de2 ♜b7 19 g5 ♞h5 (as in the main game the knight halts White's kingside pawn advance, slowing down his progress sufficiently that Black has time to create a serious assault on the queenside) 20 ♚d2 ♜fb8 21 ♜b1 ♞g3 22 ♞xg3 ♜xb2! 23 ♙d4 ♜xa2+ 24 ♞xa2 ♜xb1+ 0-1 R.Bitoun-W.So, Philippines Championship, Tagaytay City 2010.

11...♞a5

This is the difference that catches some people out: Black is content to place his knight on the edge of the board rather than the more familiar e5-square.

12 ♙b3 b5

At last Black finds an opportunity to advance a queenside pawn to aid the attack. The b-pawn has a dual function in that it threatens to oust the defending knight on c3 with ...b5-b4, while introducing the option of ...♞c4, ♙xc4 ...b5xc4 to open the b-file for the queen's rook.



13 g4 ♚b4

The consistent approach, which is easy for the Englishman to spot as he is an expert on this line.

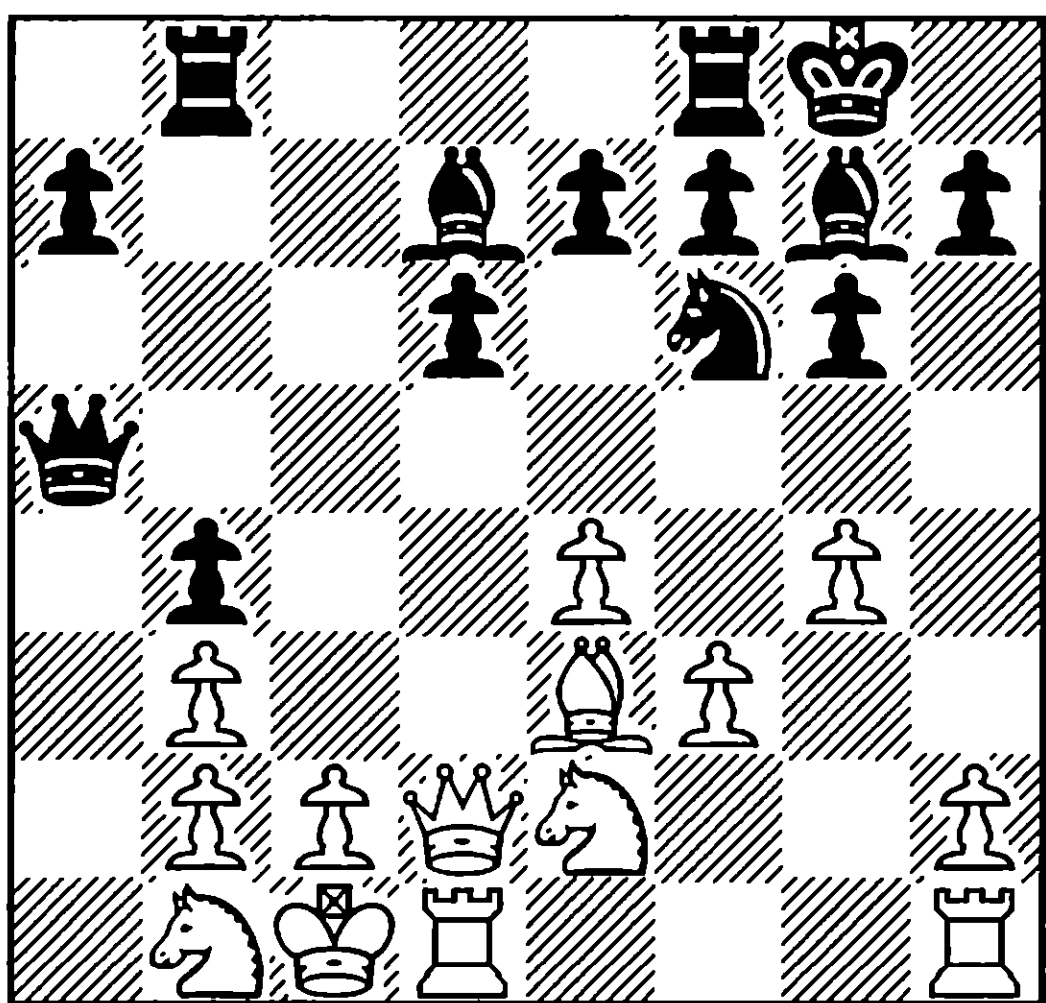
14 ♞b1

The knight retreats out of harm's way. 14 ♞d5 also allows Black to maintain an initiative after 14...♞xb3+ 15 cxb3 ♞xd5 16 exd5 (16 ♚xd5 ♙b5 17 ♞d4 e6 18 ♚g5 ♙f6 19 ♚h6 ♚c8+ 20 ♔b1 ♚a6 favours Black) 16...♚a5 17 ♔b1 ♜fc8 18 ♜c1 ♜b5 (putting pressure on the d5-pawn) 19 ♜xc8+ ♙xc8 20 ♜c1 ♙b7 with the superior chances.

14...♞xb3+ 15 axb3

It is not safe to try 15 cxb3 because the knight on b1 takes an escape square away from the white king, so that 15...♜c8+ wins a piece.

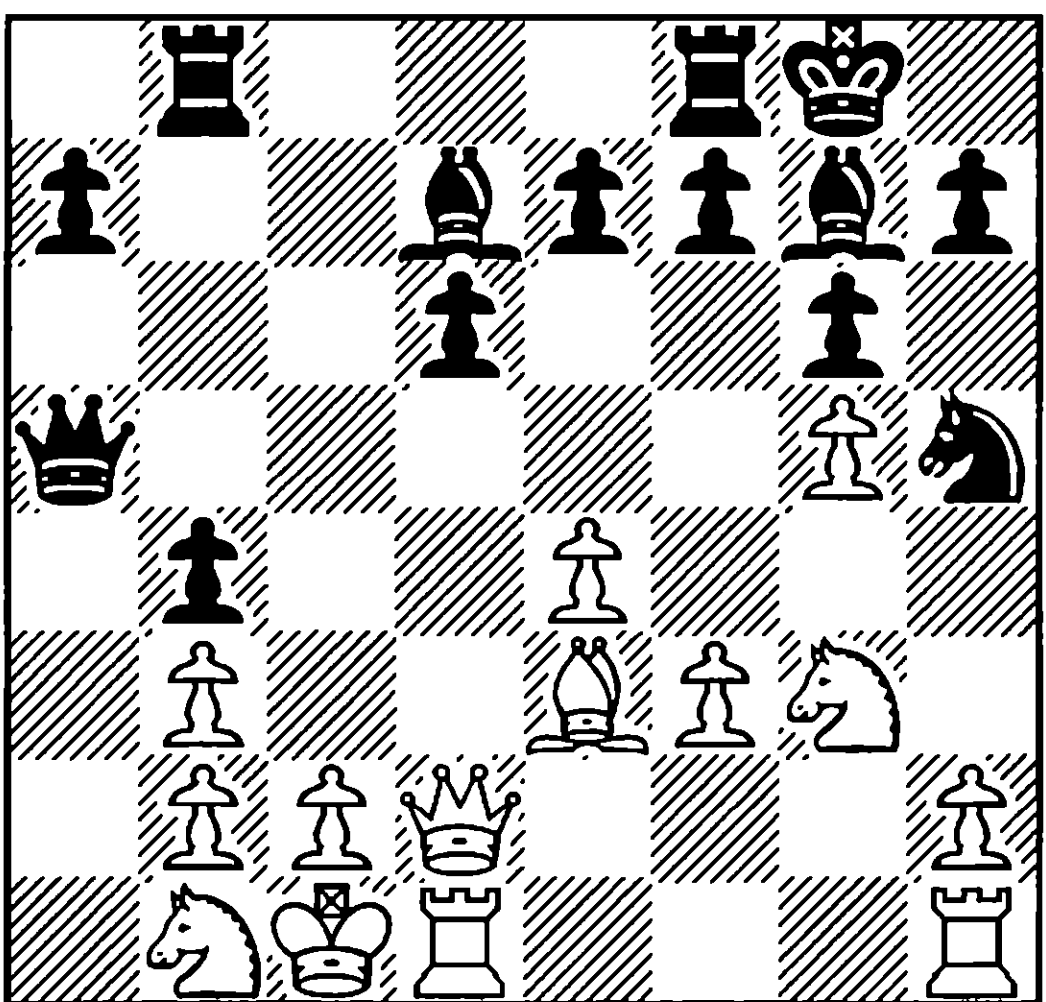
15...♔a5



This theme of attacking with the queen in the Chinese Dragon is the perfect way to create danger at the earliest opportunity. By taking on b3 the black knight has allowed his queen to infiltrate along the a-file.

16 g5 ♞h5 17 ♞g3

White is hoping that his opponent will capture on g3 and then give him enough time to play ♔h2. However, the general rule *a pawn attack rewards the person who gains the initiative* indicates that it is Black who has all the winning chances here.



17...♔a2!

It is always good news to threaten mate, and here it also helps to improve Black's position because White must now compromise his forces, and his dream of somehow attacking on the h-file has to be forgotten.

18 ♞d4

Not 18 c3? ♞a4! (a flashy way to win, though 18...bxc3 19 bxc3 ♔xb3 should also do the job) 19 bxa4 bxc3 20 ♞xc3 ♞xc3 21 ♔xc3 (21 bxc3 allows 21...♖b1 mate) 21...♖fc8 and the white queen is pinned.

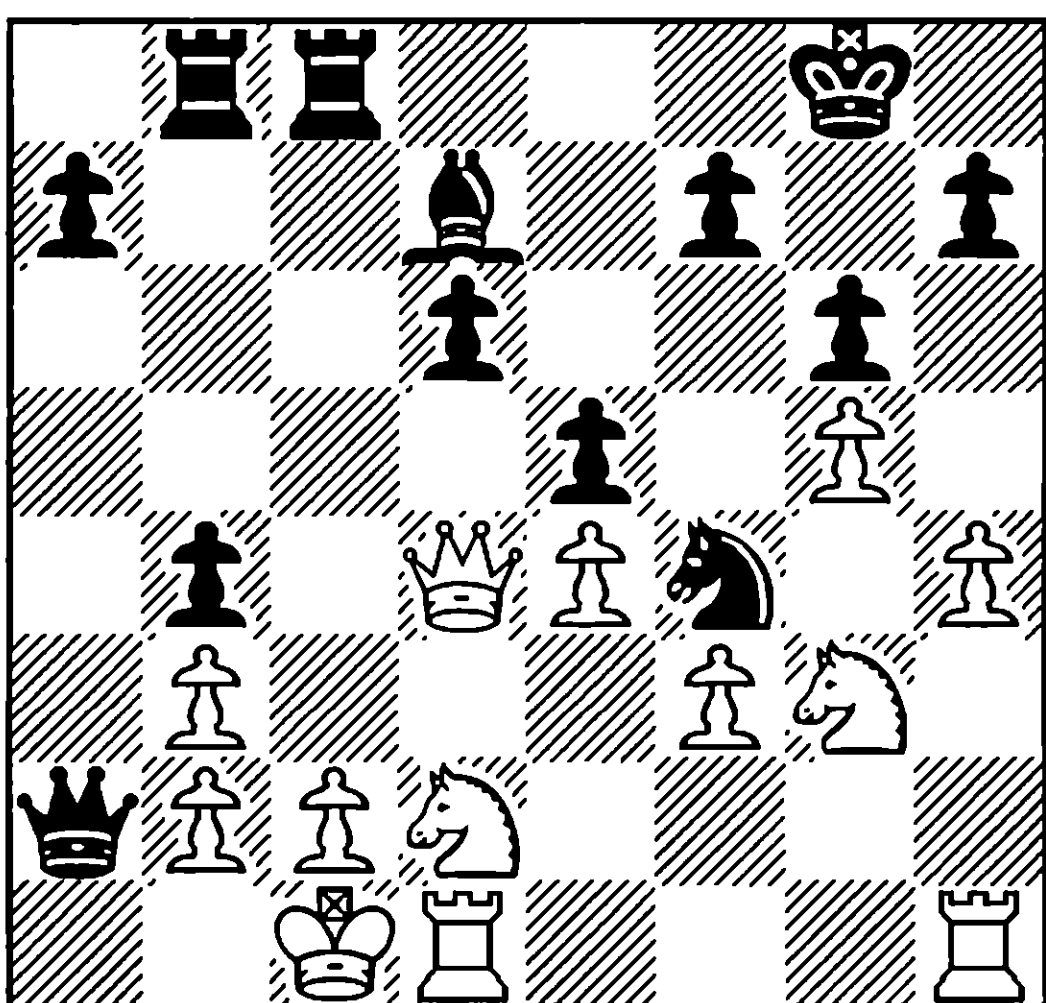
18...♞xd4 19 ♔xd4 ♞f4

The knight on f4 is handily placed, but White is oblivious to any danger and tries to resurrect his attack by advancing on the h-file.

20 h4 ♖fc8

The king's rook is added to the onslaught and the immediate threat is 21...♔xb3, exploiting the pinned c-pawn.

21 ♞d2 e5!



The white queen is nudged out of the way to allow Black to wreak havoc.

22 ♔e3

22 ♖xd6 is answered by 22 ♜e8! and surprisingly White has no defence to the threat of 23...♜b6 trapping the queen, since 24 ♖xe5 ♜d3 and 24 ♜c4 ♜d8 25 ♖c5 ♖a1 are both mate.

22...♜xc2+!

A startling way to break through the white pawn barrier. It is not exactly surprising that the tactics flow in Black's favour when you *count the pieces* targeting the white king.

23 ♜xc2 ♜c8+ 24 ♞c4 ♜xc4+!

The attack is relentless – this further sacrifice brings into play the only piece so far not to make a direct contribution, which is the bishop.

25 bxc4 ♜a4+ 0-1

White resigned in view of 26 ♔c1 ♖a1+ 27 ♔d2 ♖xb2+ 28 ♔e1 ♞g2+ winning comfortably.

The emergence of China as a powerful chess nation has been impressive. Nevertheless, even top players have their off days and here is one of them, in which Black is undone by a direct attack.

Game 13

Wang Hao-Zhou Jianchao

Danzhou 2010

King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3

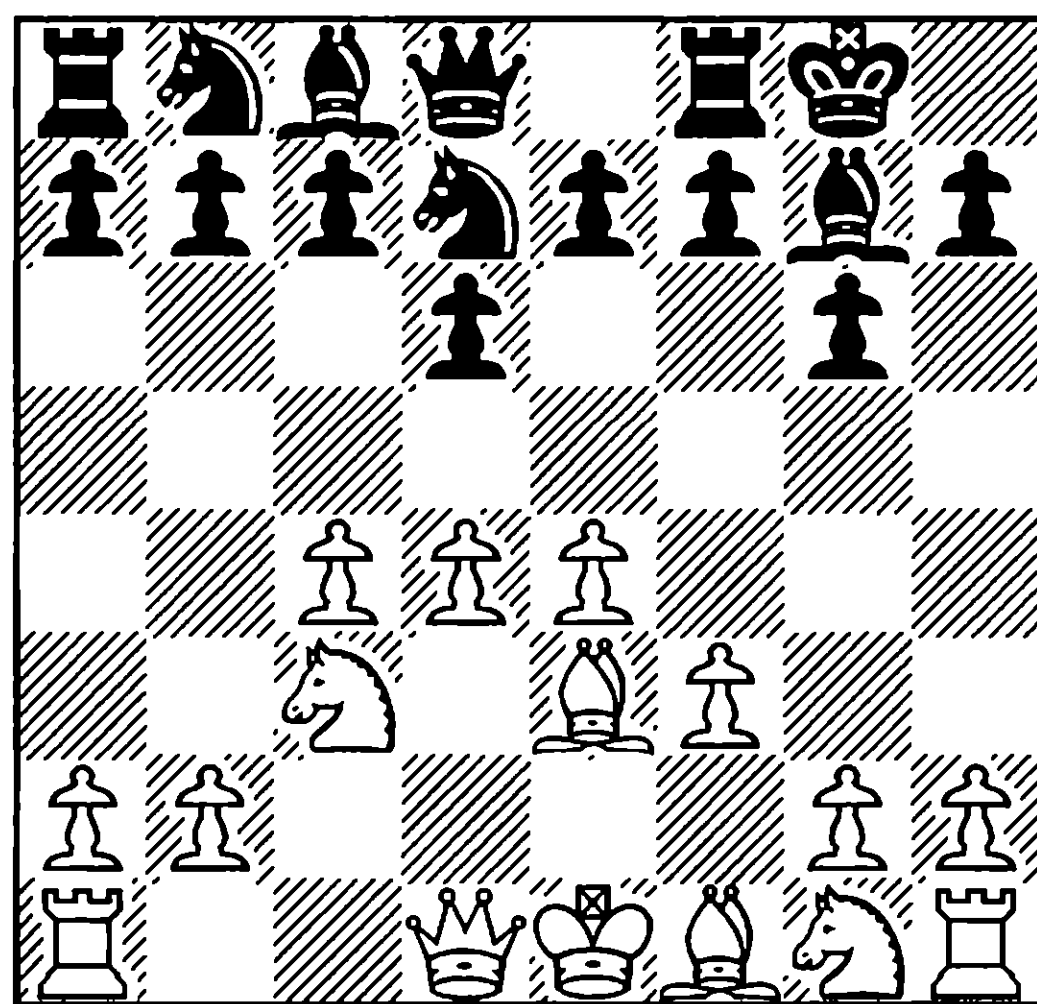
A strange-looking move, but it is based on various move-order tricks. One idea is that the Grünfeld with

3...d5 can be met by 4 cxd5 ♜xd5 5 e4, when the d5-knight has to retreat as there is no white knight on c3 to take.

3...♜g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♞c3 0-0 6 ♜e3

White's plan is straightforward: he wants to play ♖d2, 0-0, ♜h6, followed by h4-h5 looking for checkmate. Of course, it can certainly work well amongst casual players, but as you improve it is easy enough to adopt lines that thwart White's direct attack.

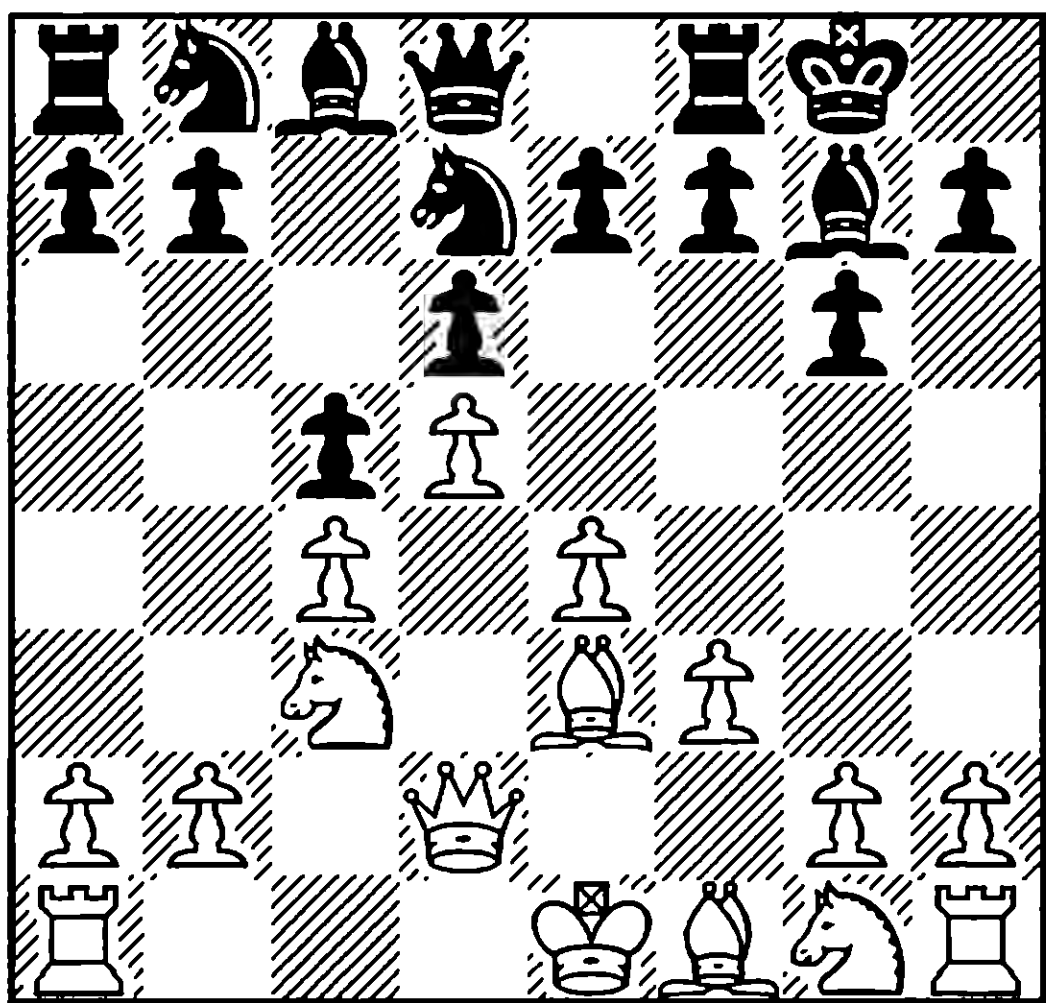
6...♞fd7!?



It is a telling comment on this move that I could not find a reference to this idea when looking into older sources on the Sämisch. That is hardly surprising because, although the knight retreat can work in some variations, here it just looks odd. Frankly, count the pieces and you can see that Black now only has the rook and bishop to guard against the expected surge on the kingside. My guess is that 6...♞fd7 was inspiration at the board, either that or Black was lulled into a false sense of security by seeing that Rumanian grandmaster Nisipeanu has played it

before, though that was a long time ago before he became a star player. One or two other grandmasters have given it a go, but with generally poor results. All the same, Jianchao Zhou is rated 2652 so he must surely have had some home analysis to wow his opponent.

7 ♔d2 c5 8 d5



8...♔a5!?

An early excursion by the queen. The argument for it is that White tends to castle queenside in this variation, so Black wants the queen ready and primed for the counter-attack; it also supports an eventual ...b7-b5. Other moves were:

a) 8...a6 9 a4 a5 (9...♘e5 10 h3 f5 11 f4 ♘f7 12 exf5 gxf5 13 ♘f3 gave White an edge in M.Zainea-L.Nisipeanu, Rumanian Team Championship 1995, as Black's pieces lack harmony) 10 ♘h3 ♘e5 11 ♘f2 f5 12 f4 (12 ♔e2!? also seems reasonable, intending to castle kingside) 12...♘f7 13 ♔e2 e5 14 dxe6 ♔xe6 15 0-0 ♘c6 16 ♘b5 led to brighter prospects for White in

V.Raicevic G.Starcevic, Belgrade 2005.

b) 8...♔e8 9 h4 ♘f8?! (I reckon 9...h5! is necessary to slow down the onslaught: the daring 10 g4 is not completely convincing after 10...hxg4 11 h5 ♔a5! with a double-edged position) 10 h5 ♘bd7 11 ♔h6 (this is similar to the main game where a direct approach turns out to be crushing) 11...♔h8 12 ♘h3 ♘e5 13 ♔e2 a6?! (too slow: Black needs to distract White from the attack; instead, maybe 13...♔a5 has some merit) 14 ♘g5 f6 15 ♔xf8! fxg5 (15...♔xf8 allows White to win style by 16 ♘xh7! ♔xh7 17 hxg6+ ♔xg6 18 ♔h6+ ♔f7 19 f4 ♘g6 20 f5 and if 20...♘e5 then 21 ♔h5+ ♔g7 22 ♔h7 mate) 16 ♔h6 ♘f7 17 hxg6 ♘xh6 18 ♔xh6 1-0 N.Minev-D.Pantaleev, Bulgarian Championship, Sofia 1959.

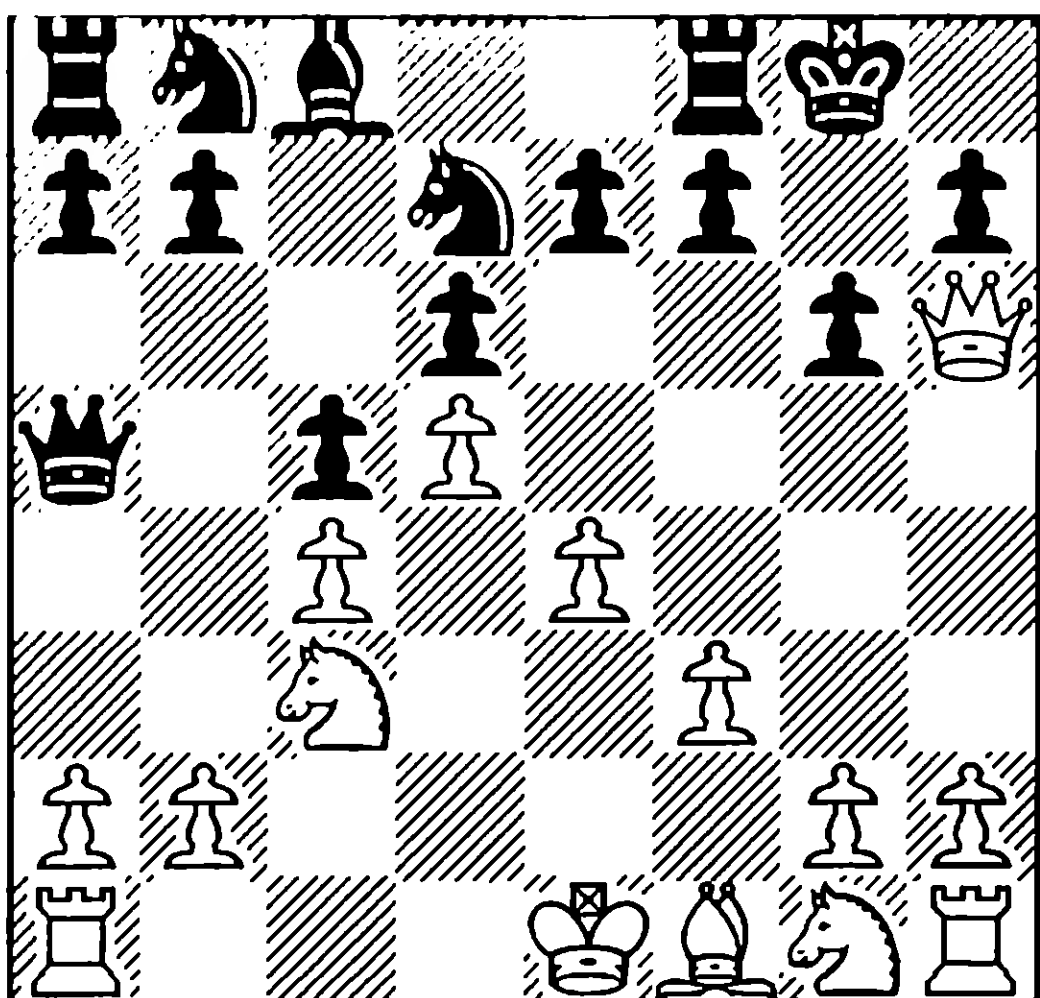
9 ♔h6

White is following tradition by preparing to exchange the defending bishop. It is also a prelude to h2-h4 which if played immediately might be answered by ...h7-h5, stopping the further advance of the white pawn.

9...♔xh6!?

An interesting idea, luring the white queen away from the queenside. I know from my own experience of the opening that this can work well, but I always had a knight on f6. The difference here is that, if he plays a casual move, Black could be thrown into an opening crisis because he only has the rook currently directly defending his king.

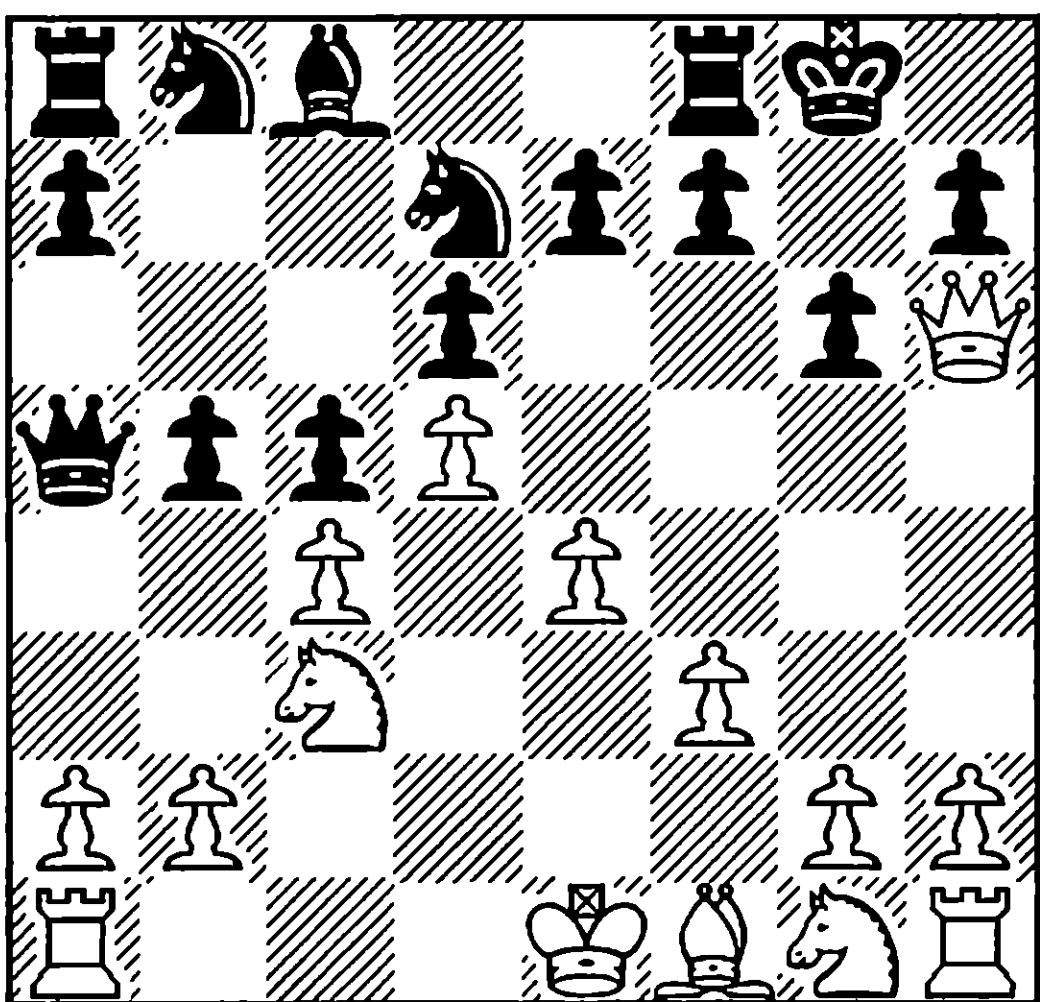
10 ♖xh6



10...b5!?

Black is merrily carrying on with his plan of opening up the queenside – a brave decision – and he might get away with it if he plays like a computer. Otherwise, he seems to be in denial about the wretched state of his kingside.

I much prefer 10...♞e5. Then White cannot get away with the obvious plan of advancing the h-pawn to try and add the king's rook to the attack with 11 h4 f6 12 h5?, in view of the stunning reply 12...g5!, when the white queen is trapped and ...♞f7 will seal its fate.



11 h4

A blatant attempt to steamroller Black and deliver mate. It might not be the most accurate continuation objectively speaking, but that ignores the practicalities of an actual game, especially as there is a suspicion that Black is making up the opening as he goes along. Perhaps 11 cxb5 should be considered on the basis of the general rule: *when advancing your pawns be ready to take time out to make some defensive moves.*

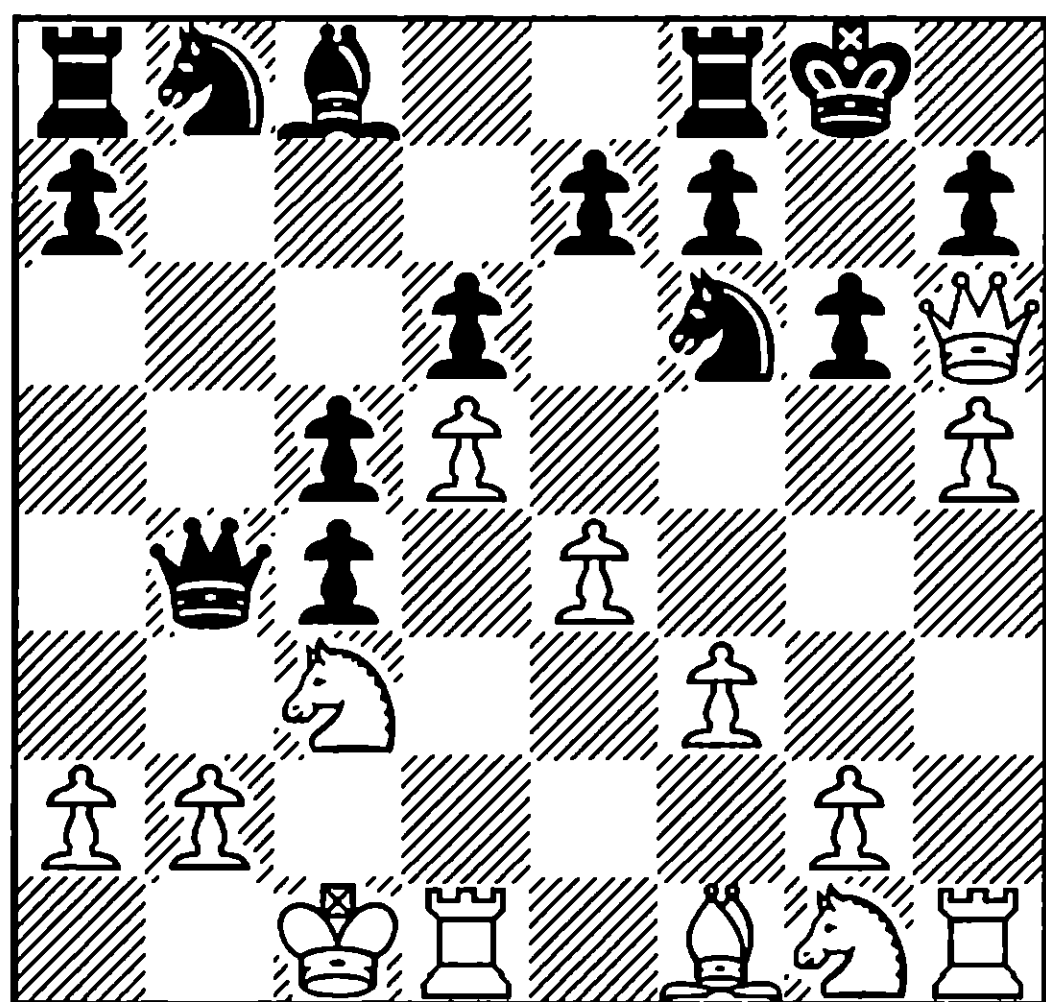
11...bxc4?!

The problem with taking on c4 is that it gives White the perfect excuse to ignore it and carry on attacking. As Black's kingside is looking precarious he needs to be ultra accurate, which demands that he finds 11...b4! 12 h5 (or 12 ♞ce2 ♞a6 13 h5 b3+ 14 ♞c3 ♞f6 and Black is fine) 12...♞f6 (taking the knight with 12...bxc3? is a grave error, since Black falls to a vicious attack: 13 hxg6 cxb2+ 14 ♔e2 ♞f6 15 gxh7+ ♔h8 16 ♕xf8+ ♞g8 17 ♕xg8 mate) 13 hxg6 fxg6 14 ♞ce2 with roughly equal chances.

12 h5 ♞f6 13 0-0-0

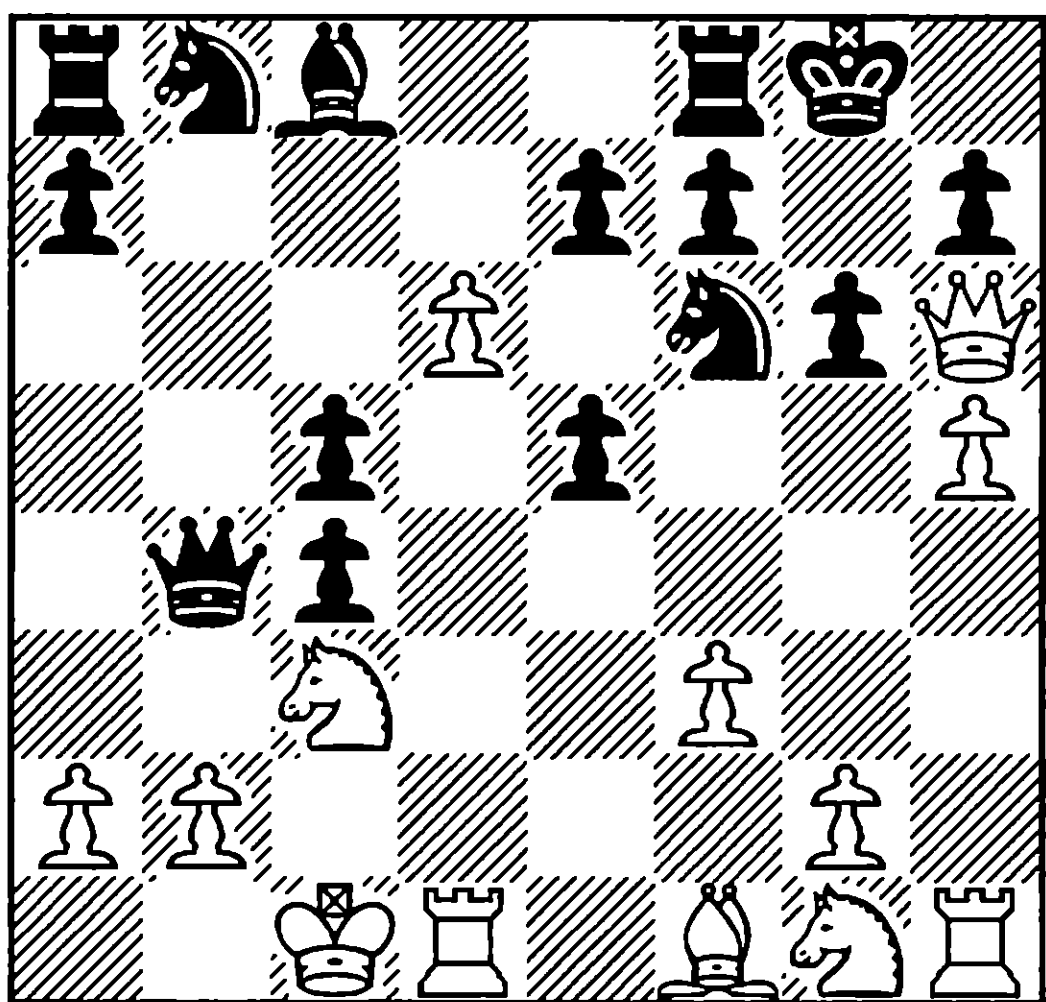
White has smoothly developed and now his queen is ideally placed to push on to victory. He just needs to target the h7-pawn by manoeuvring a knight to g5 or eliminating the defending knight that has returned to f6. If Black takes the h-pawn with 13...♞xh5, then 14 g4 ♞f6 15 g5 (or 15 ♞h3, heading for g5) 15...♞h5 16 ♞ge2, intending 17

13...♔b4?



14 e5!









14...dxe5 15 d6



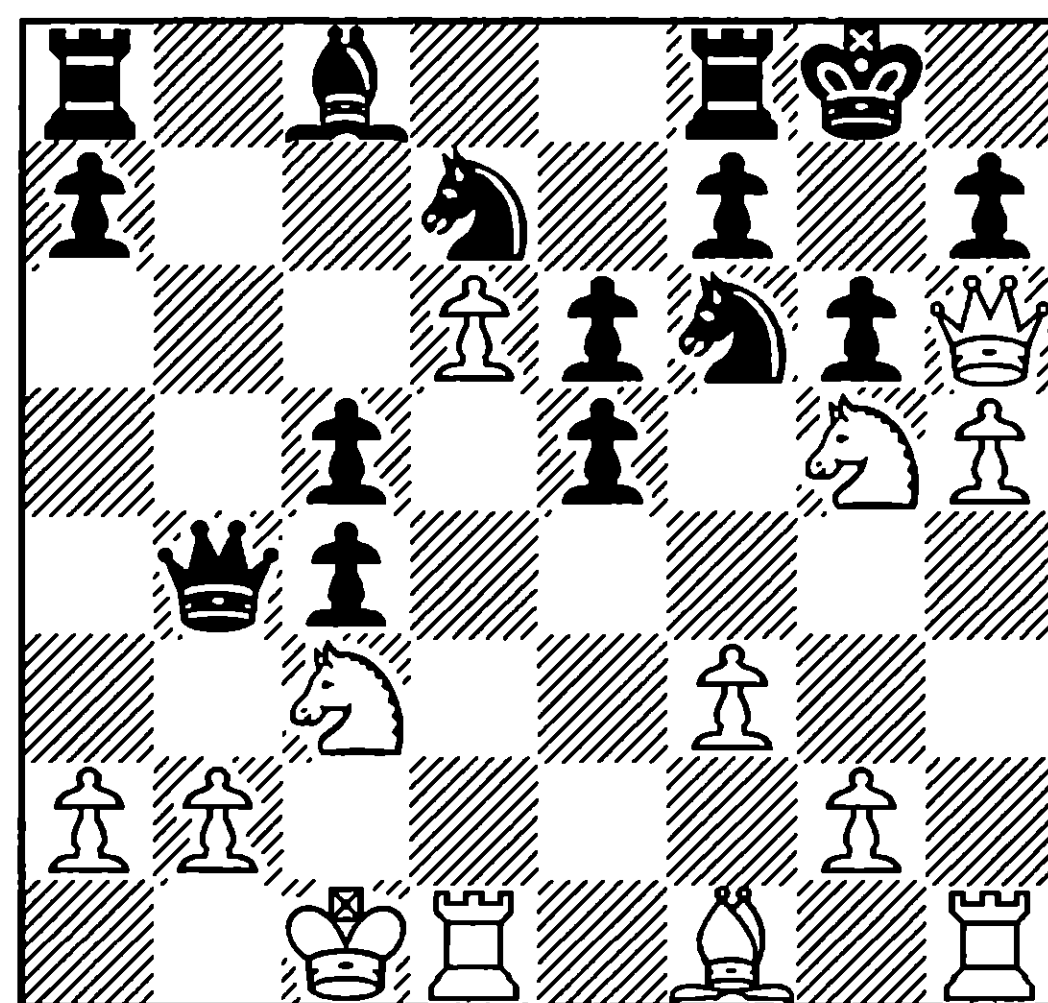
Black is in trouble:








b) 15...♘bd7 is met by 16 dxe7! ♖e8 17 hxg6 fxg6 18 ♘d5 ♚b7 19 ♙xc4 (the threat of discovered check is lethal) 19...♔h8 20 ♘xf6 ♘xf6 21 ♚f8+ and wins.

There are times when you just need a quiet move to improve your position and this is the case here. The knight prepares to leap to g5 and Black's counterplay on the queenside is invisible.

Or 16...xh5 17 g5 f6 18 xh7
bd7 19 xf6+ xf6 20 h8 mate.

17  g5



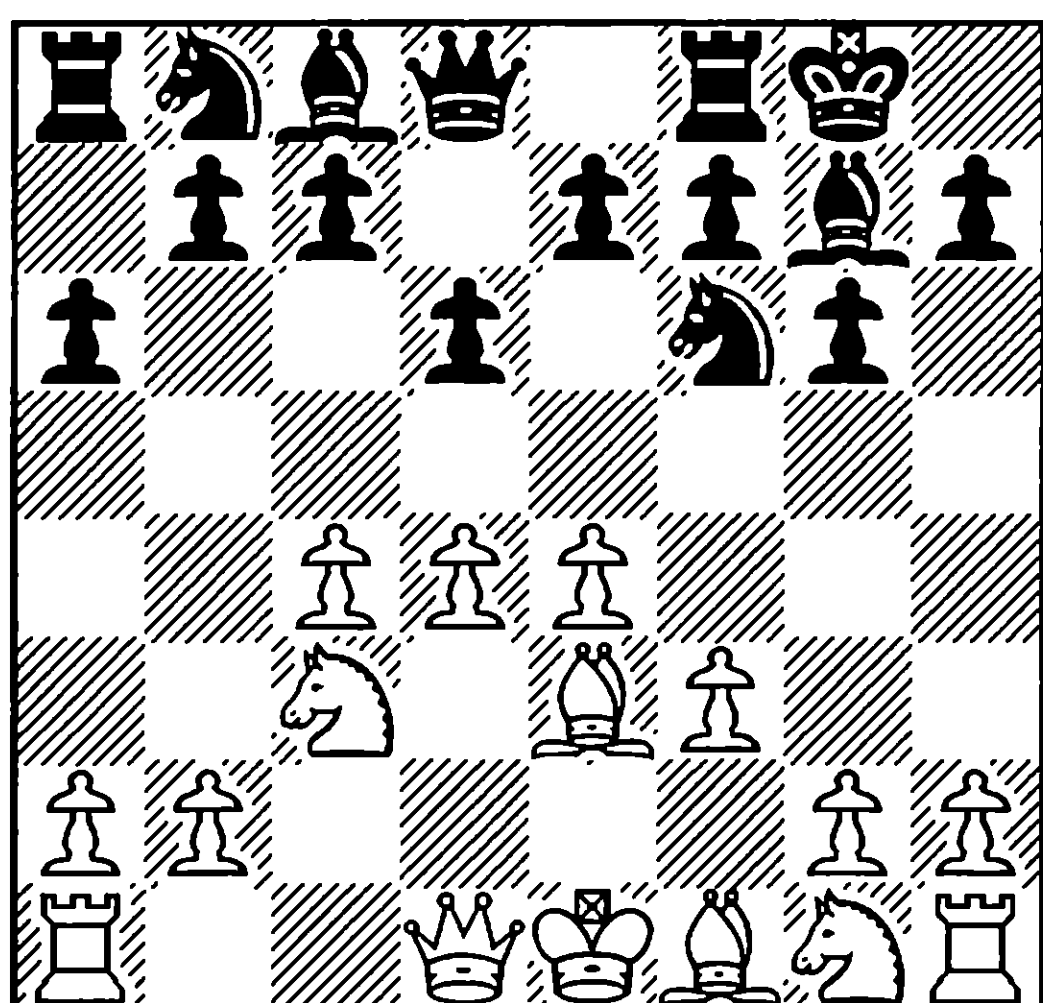
The desperate attempt at survival with 17...gxf5 allows the clever mating combination starting 18 xh7 xh7 19 xh5 df6 20 h3 when Black can do nothing to prevent the threat of q3+ and q7 mate.

18 ♖d2 1-0

The King's Indian Defence is a tough customer for White, though you might not know it from that performance. In a bid to redress the balance here is another encounter in the Sämisch Variation:

Game 14
Y.Razuvaev-I.Sokolov
 Tilburg 1992
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♙e3 a6



Do not be fooled by this innocent-looking pawn: the idea is to combine it with ...c7-c6 and ...b7-b5 to initiate activity on the queenside. Consequently, White is often put off from castling that way, because Black has already made preparations for a counter-attack.

7 ♙d2

The good thing about this line for White is that you can carry out the standard plan against just about every-

thing. The queen moves up to support ♙e3-h6, exchanging Black's defending bishop, followed by h2-h4-h5.

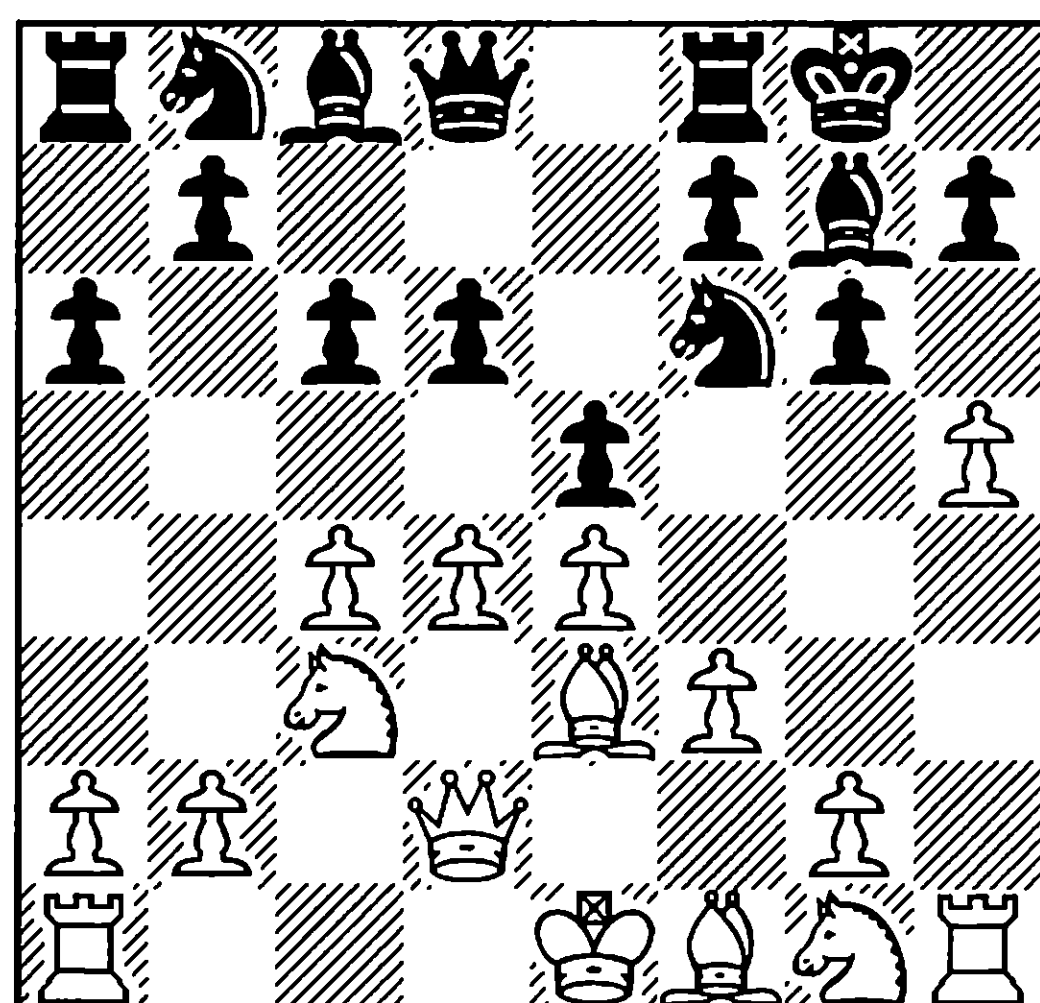
7...c6 8 h4

White makes certain that Black is aware of his attacking intentions. The alternatives 8 0-0-0 and 8 ♙d3 are also worth investigating.

8...e5

This is a well-known idea in the King's Indian. It puts pressure on the centre in an effort to dissuade White from playing ♙h6 because the black pawn will capture on d4.

9 h5?!



A gamble that ignores the general rule "*can the pawn storm be easily stopped?*" because clearly Black can just take it without harming his kingside pawn barrier. White would argue that at the price of a mere pawn he can open up the h-file for his king's rook.

The direct 9 ♙h6 is less than effective when Black can capture in the centre; for instance, 9...exd4 10 ♙xg7 dxc3 11 ♙h6 cxb2 12 ♙b1 ♙e8 13 ♙xb2 ♘bd7 winning.

9...♞xh5 10 ♞ge2

The lunge with 10 g4 is premature in view of 10...♞g3 11 ♖h2 ♞xf1 12 ♔xf1 ♞d7, when Black has nothing to fear on the kingside and is a pawn up.

10...exd4! 11 ♔xd4

Normally White prefers to take with the knight because the bishop aims to occupy the h6-square and so is needed on e3, but 11 ♞xd4? allows 11...♞g3! 12 ♖h2 ♞d7 with the better prospects.

11...♞f6 12 g4 c5!

Black pushes the bishop out of the way so his own dark-squared bishop will have more influence over the h8-a1 diagonal. It also signals an intention to install a queen's knight on d4 which is a feature of the King's Indian.

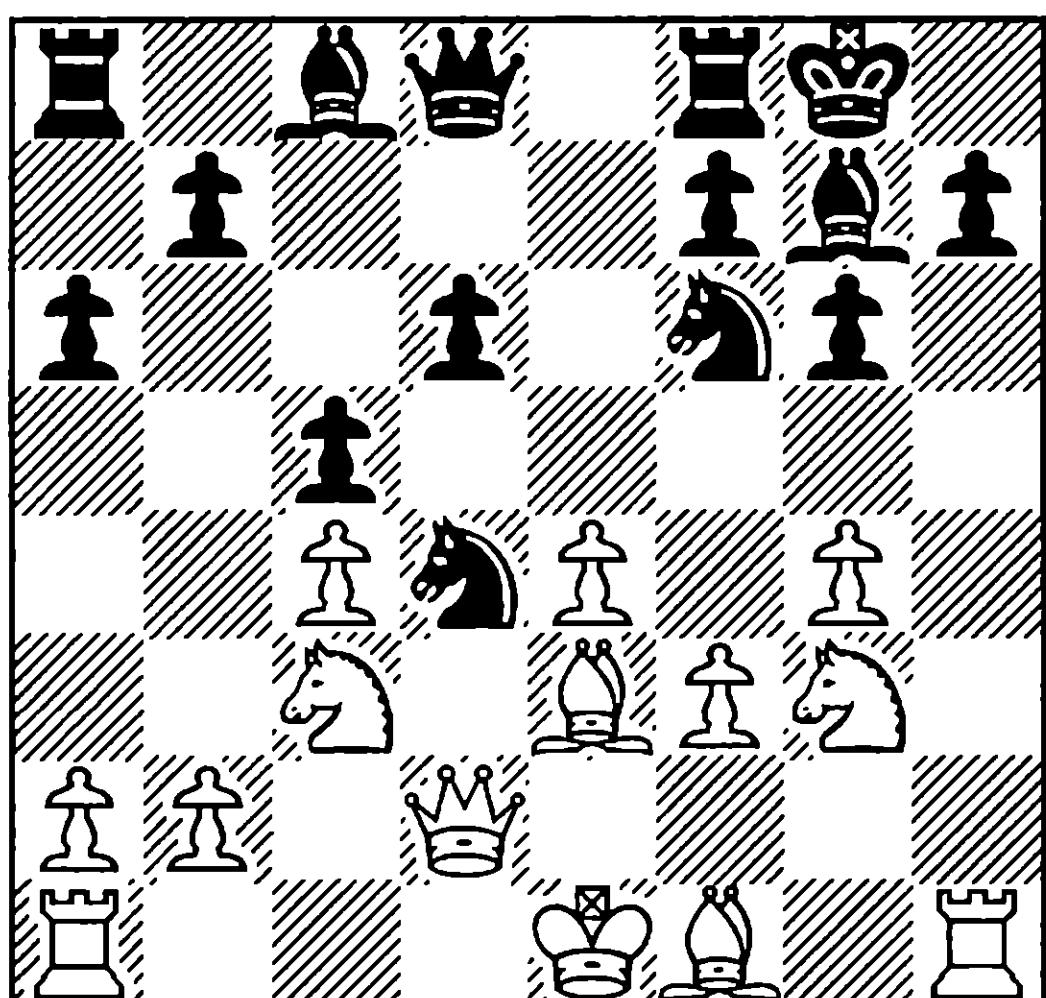
13 ♔e3 ♞c6

Apart from going to d4 Black is now contemplating ...♞e5 to target the c4 and f3-pawns.

14 ♞g3?!

I think White should try 14 0-0-0, though 14...♞e5! admittedly favours Black.

14...♞d4!



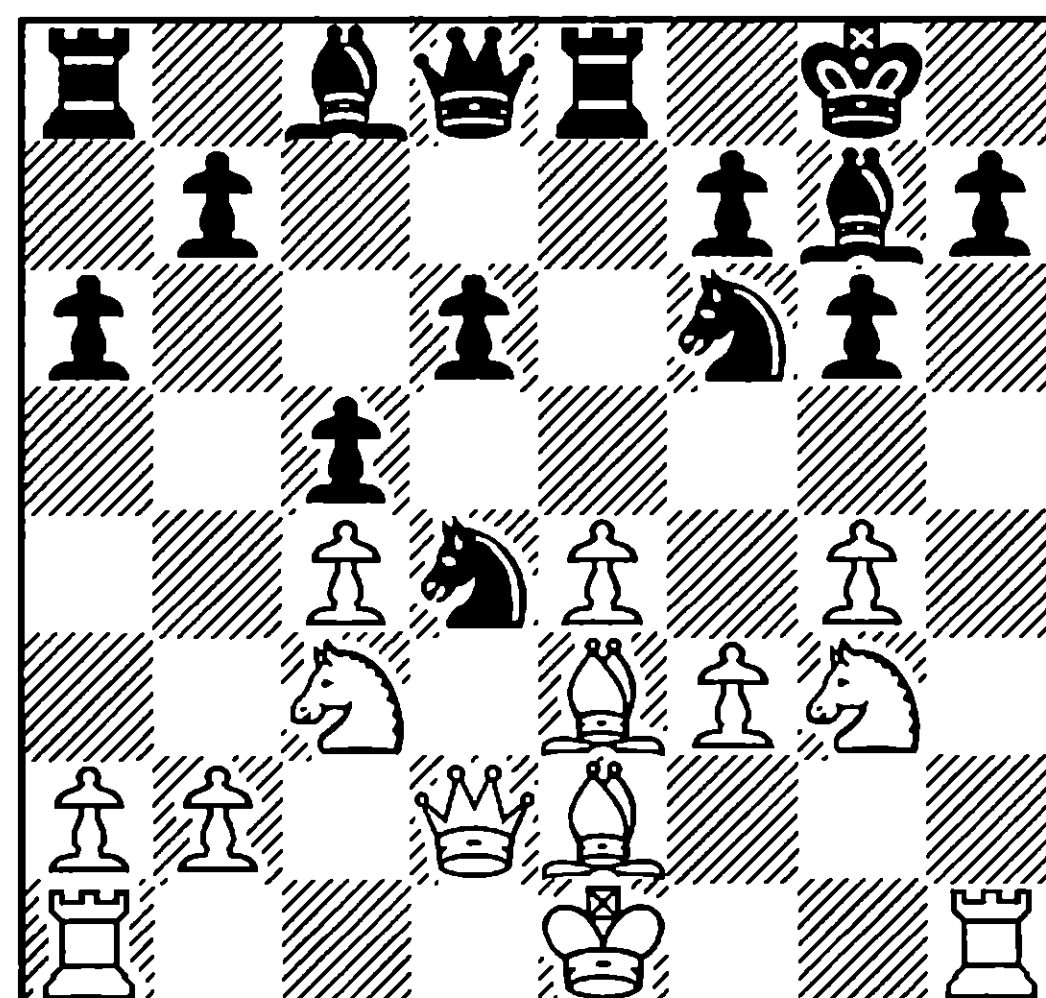
The knight is very well placed on d4 because it restricts the opponent's activity. Nevertheless, Black has to be careful not to waste time since the semi-open h-file provides White with plenty of attacking opportunities.

15 ♔e2

Razuvaev would be reluctant, in any case, to enhance the power of the g7-bishop by exchanging on d4, but here there is also a tactical reason to avoid the urge to grab a pawn: 15 ♔xd4?! cxd4 16 ♔xd4? ♞xe4! 17 ♔xe4 ♖e8 and the white queen is pinned; while 16 ♞ce2 is slyly met by 16...♔c7 to put pressure on the c4-pawn, and 17 ♞xd4? runs into 17...d5 revealing a discovered attack on the knight stationed on the g3-square.

15...♖e8

A little ploy which features in various openings: the rook moves sideways out of harm's way so that the threatened ♔e3-h6 can be met by a retreat, preserving Black's dark-squared bishop.



16 ♔h6 ♔h8 17 ♔g5

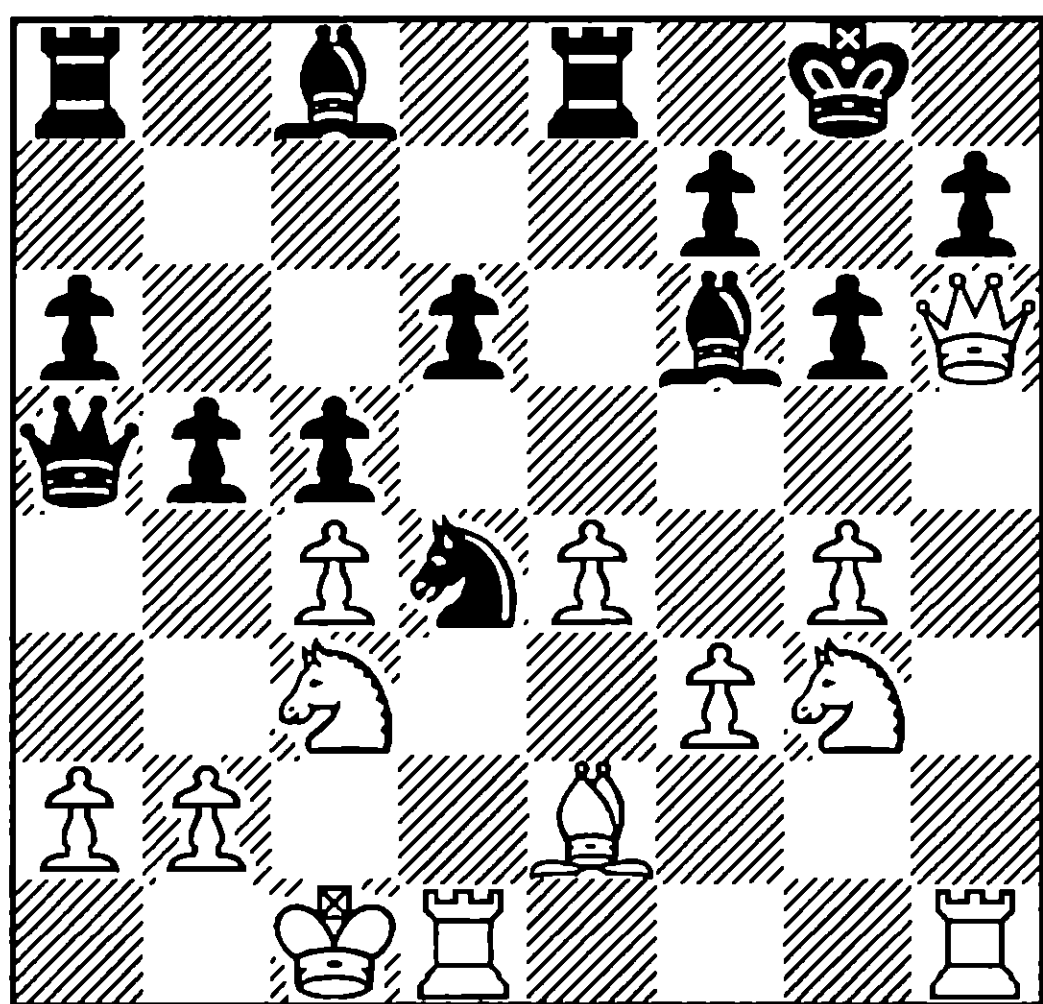
17 ♞f5!? looks impressive and

17...gxf5?? 18 ♖g5+ ♗g7 19 ♜xg7 mate would be a dream come true. However, the knight on f5 does not present any immediate problems, so Black can just ignore it and carry on advancing on the queenside: 17...b5! 18 ♞xd4 cxd4 19 ♞d5 bxc4 20 ♙xc4 ♙b7 with the superior chances.

17...b5 18 0-0-0

The timing has to be absolutely correct in attacks on opposite sides of the board. 18 ♞f5? is no longer a decent option in view of 18...gxf5 19 gxf5 ♙xf5 20 exf5? ♞xf3+ when the fork wraps up the game.

18...♙a5 19 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 20 ♙h6



20...♙e6?!

Sokolov demonstrates a lot of class by not panicking at the prospect of White taking on h7. The point is that his king has an escape route via f8, while his own attack is enhanced by the exchange of White's dark-squared bishop. Nevertheless, I think Black should be more cautious at the prospect of White throwing everything at him and force matters with 20...♙g7!.

Then 21 ♜xh7+ ♗f8 leaves the attack at a dead end, and 22 ♞f5? can now be safely met by 22...gxf5 winning comfortably.

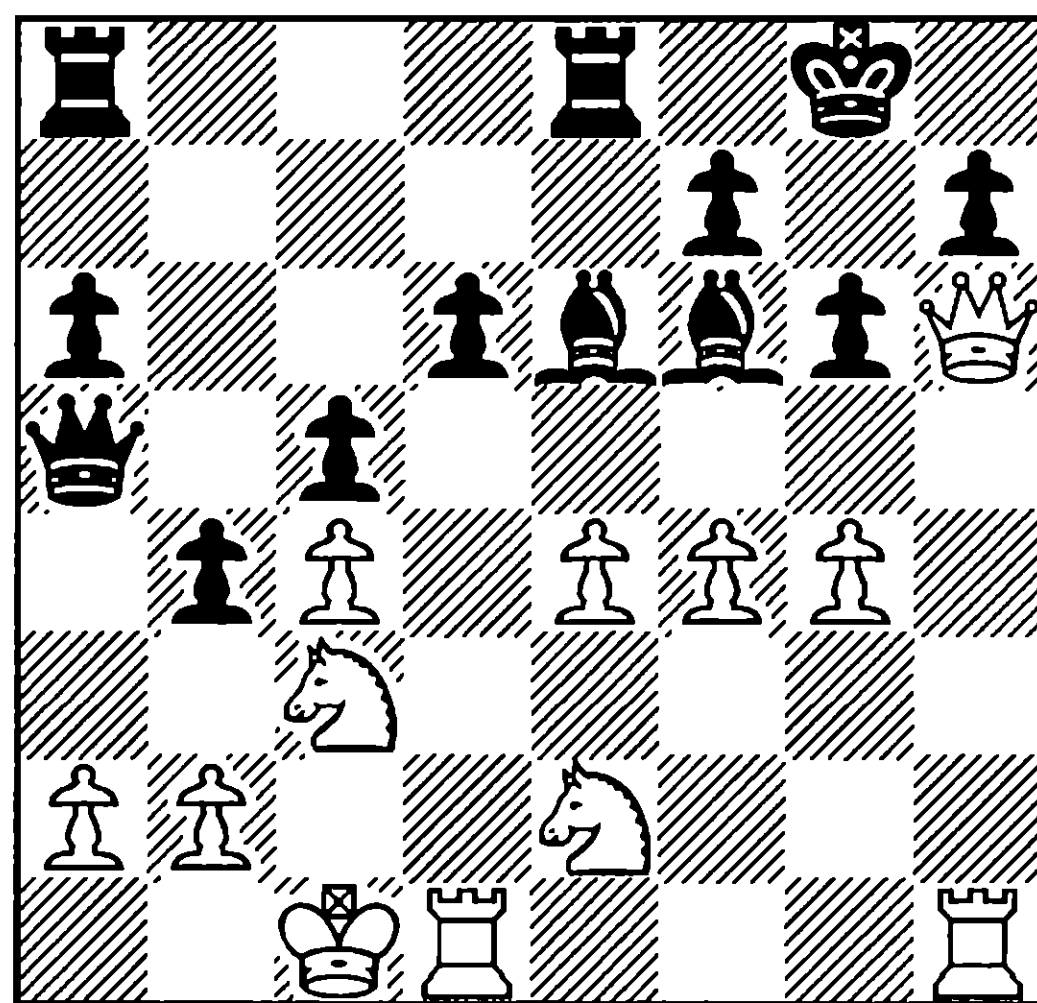
21 f4

I think 21 ♞f5! is once more a nice practical reply because, if Black ignores it, there is a combination available with 22 ♜xh7+ ♗f8 23 ♜h8+ ♙xh8 24 ♜xh8 mate. Instead, 21...♞xe2+ 22 ♞xe2 ♙xf5 23 gxf5 ♜xa2 slightly favours Black, but compared to the actual game it is a massive improvement for White.

21...♞xe2+

I prefer 21...b4 immediately because if White carries on in the same manner as the game, then 22 e5 ♙g7 23 ♜xh7+ ♗f8 24 f5 dxe5 25 fxe6 ♜xe6 26 ♞ce4 ♜xa2 is good news for Black.

22 ♞gxe2 b4



23 e5?!

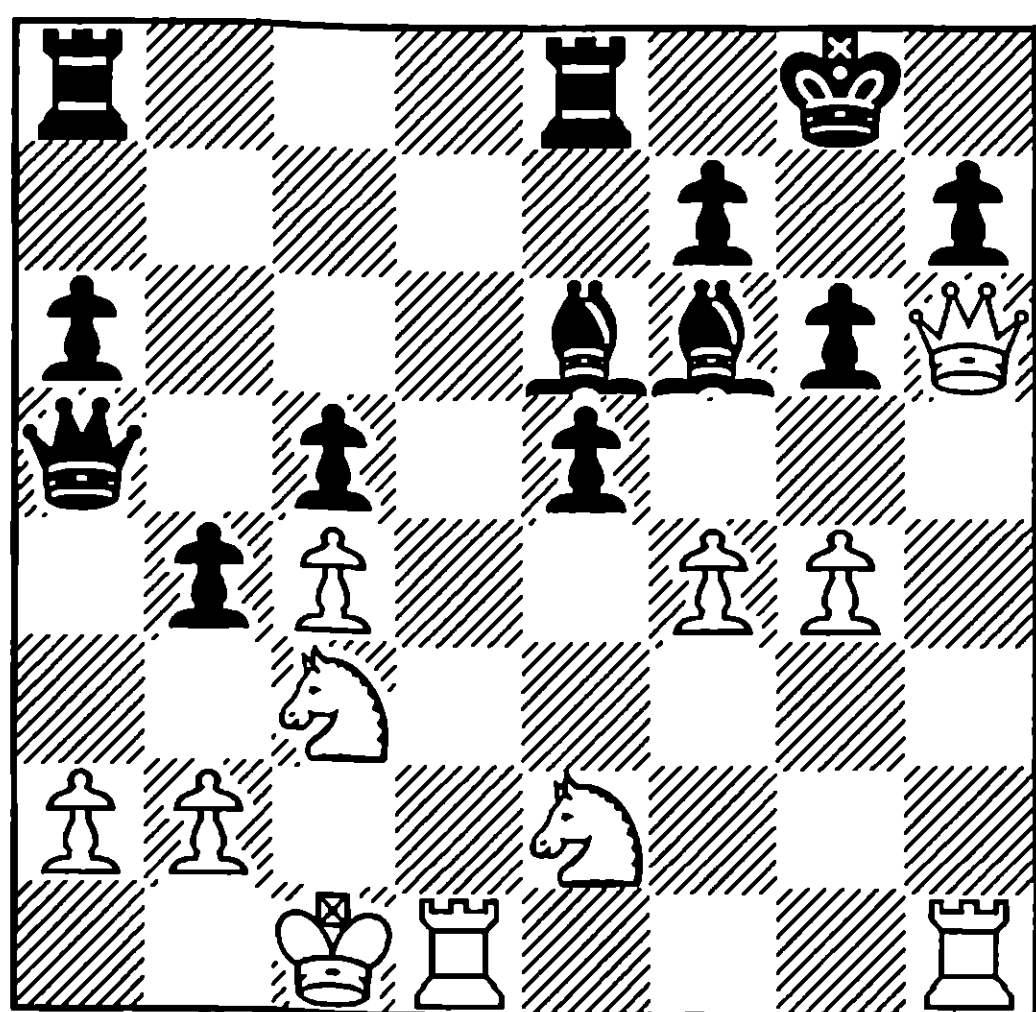
The wrong pawn break in a complicated position. After 23 g5 the dominance of the h-file allows White to emerge unscathed, though to survive he would need to see a twist in the

variations which is hardly easy at the board:

a) 23...♙g7 24 ♚xh7+ ♔f8 25 f5 gxf5 26 exf5 ♙xf5 27 ♚xf5 bxc3 28 ♘xc3! (not 28 ♖df1? because of 28...♖a7! and Black defends well) 28...♙xc3 29 ♚f6!! (an astonishing move and no wonder White failed to see it when looking into the future) 29...♙xf6 30 gxf6 ♔g8 31 ♖dg1+ ♔f8 32 ♖h8 mate.

b) 23...♙xc3! 24 bxc3 bxc3 25 ♚xh7+ ♔f8 26 ♚h8+ ♔e7 27 ♚f6+ ♔d7 28 ♘xc3 with double-edged play.

23...dxe5



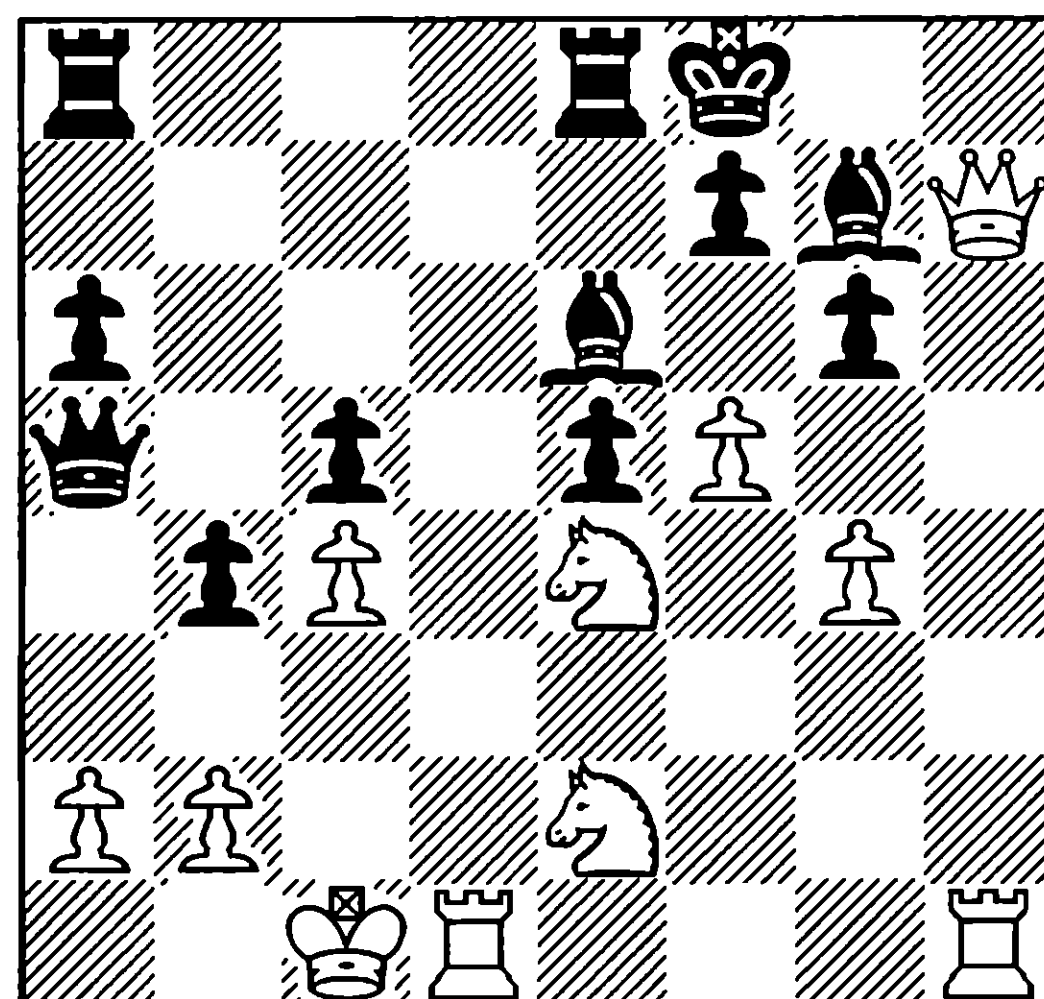
24 ♘e4?

White may be adding another piece to the attack but this comes at the heavy price of neglecting his own king. Perhaps 24 f5 needs to be examined, though the complications are tremendous.

24...♙g7 25 ♚xh7+ ♔f8 26 f5

White just needs to be able to safely play f5-f6 and Black will be in trouble, but Sokolov has seen further. 26 g5 ♚xa2 27 ♘f6 ♚xc4+ 28 ♔b1 was no better due to 28...♚a2+ 29 ♔c1 ♖ed8

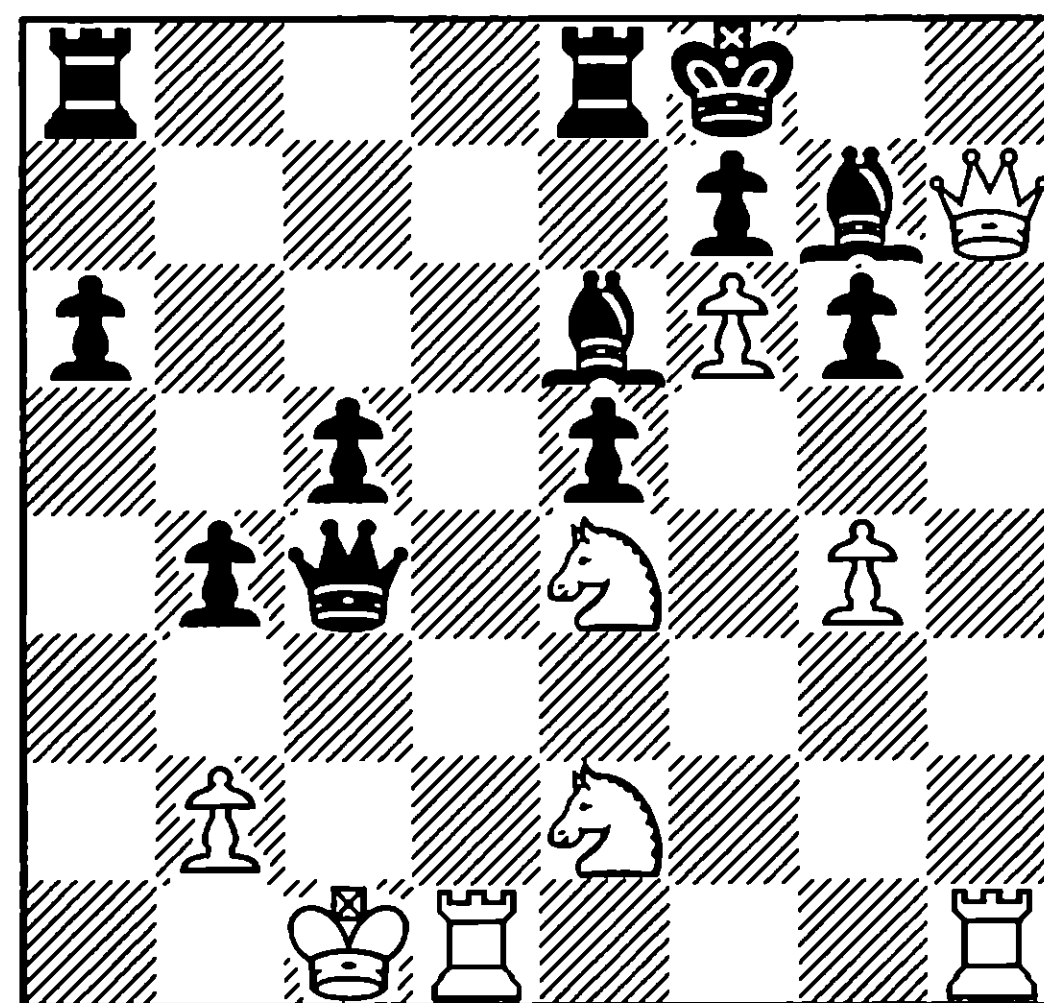
and Black is winning easily; e.g. 30 ♚g8+ ♔e7 31 ♚xg7 ♚a1 32 ♔c2 b3 33 ♔c3 ♚a5 mate.



26...♚xa2!

The best way to defend is by attacking!

27 f6 ♚xc4+



28 ♔d2

After 28 ♘2c3? ♙xf6 29 ♘xf6 ♚f4+ 30 ♔c2 bxc3 Black wins.

28...♖ed8+ 29 ♔e3

There is not much hope in the other king move either: 29 ♔e1!? invites pressure, and 29...♖xd1+ 30 ♔xd1 ♚d3+ 31 ♔e1 ♙xf6 32 ♘xf6 ♙c4 33 ♚h2 ♖d8 is crushing.

29...♖b3+ 30 ♜f2 ♜xf0 31 ♜xf0

Instead 31 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 32 ♜h8 ♜e7 33 ♜f6+ ♜d7 34 ♜xc5 ♜c6 35 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 36 ♜xe6 fxe6 leaves Black with a won ending.

31...♖xd1 32 ♜h8+ ♜e7 33 ♜xa8 ♜xf6 34 ♜h7 ♜d5 0-1

The four pawns deficit and horribly exposed king are more than enough reason for White to give up.

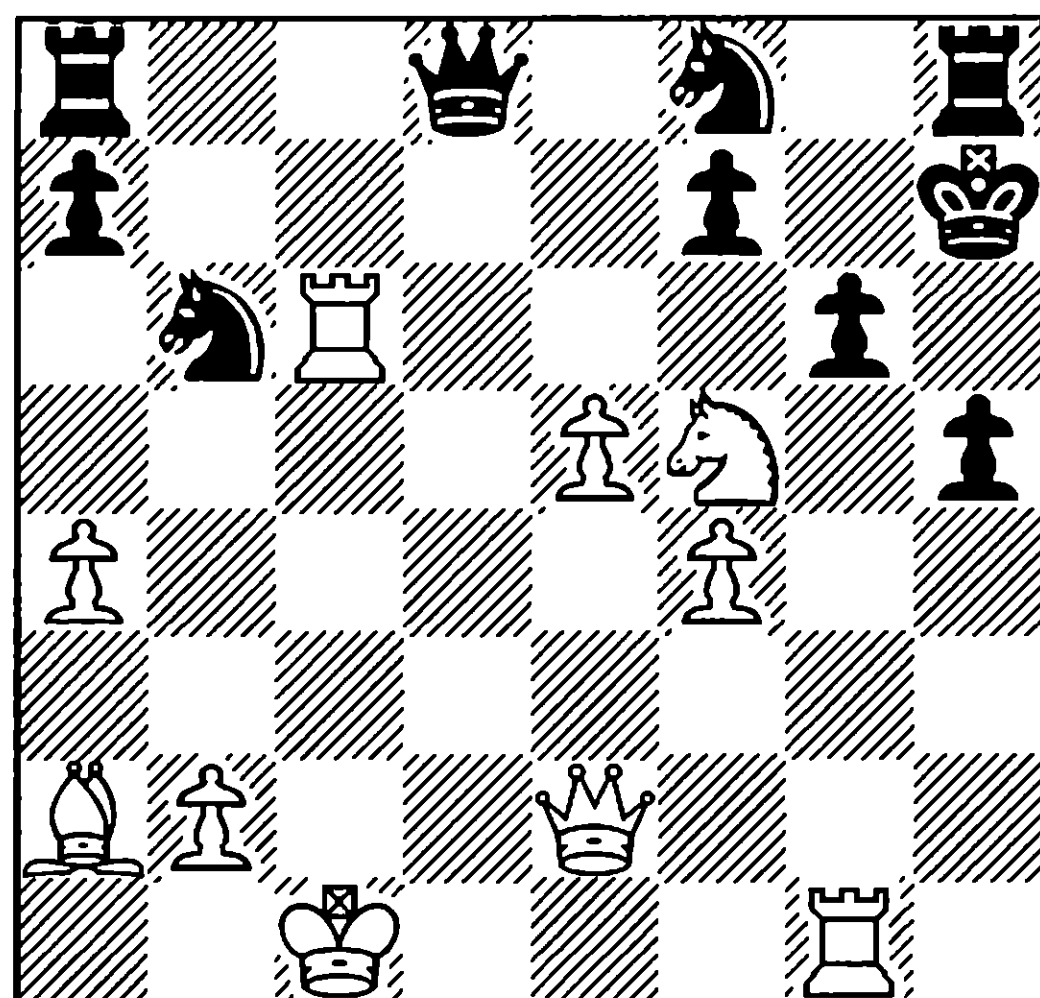
“I decided to opt for sharp play, which would leave little room for thoughts of drawish transactions.” – Ivan Sokolov, commenting after the above game in which he chose the aggressive King’s Indian Defence.

Here’s another example where Sokolov shows his attacking instincts:

I.Sokolov-T.Middelburg Dutch Team Championship 2009

White is actively pursuing the enemy king, but Black seems to have sur-

vived the onslaught, and after...



Black to play

31...♜d7

...might have been hoping that he could win some material. Unfortunately, any such illusions were quickly dispelled:

32 ♜xh5+! gxh5

Or 32...♜g8 33 ♖cxg6+ ♜xg6 34 ♖xg6+ ♜f8 35 ♜xh8 mate.

33 ♖h6 mate

“Tactics is knowing what to do when there is something to do; strategy is knowing what to do when there is nothing to do.” – Savielly Tartakower.

Chapter Three

Direct Attacks from the Opening

“It’s good to be open-minded, but don’t be so open-minded that your brain falls out.” – Carl Sagan.

General Rules for Openings

1. Gambit openings.

If an aggressive opening is rarely played there is normally a good reason. You have to make sure that, should your opponent not fall into your opening trap, your position is still reasonable.

2. Understand the opening.

A flick through a database of games on a computer is not enough to absorb an opening. It is not a good long-term idea to rattle off half a dozen moves, come up across something a bit different and then have to think for ages. A little knowledge about the previous master games in your opening means that you can follow the middlegame plans of

champions, rather than have to think up everything yourself.

3. Move your pieces.

It sounds obvious but plenty of lost games can be attributed to a lack of development. A popular opening will normally tick this box, but it can be tempting to go chasing material such as vulnerable pawns. The basic problem is that pieces which have not moved from their starting squares reduce your chances of setting up a decent defence. I would put castling at the top of the list because a neglected king in the middle is a bad sign.

4. Improve your chances in the opening.

Following on from rule 3, there is a standard rule *to move each piece only once in the opening*. This will allow you to get your forces into the action in the minimum amount of time. If instead you wander around the board with the

queen, allowing the opponent to develop pieces by attacking it, that is usually a recipe for disaster.

1. Prepare to attack.

The choice of opening is a personal one so you will have to find out over time which ones are suitable for you. An opening can easily be tested first amongst friends, against the computer, and on the internet. At the elite level it is considered that having the white pieces is an advantage, because it enables you to dictate the style of the game to a certain extent. However, for the vast majority of players there is no reason why you should not eagerly win with White or Black.

The attacking player can certainly benefit from choosing an opening that has potential for tricks and traps. Of course, tactics can occur from quiet positions as well, but you can nudge options in your favour by knowing what to do after the opening moves. The desire to win at all costs can prompt some to venture swashbuckling gambits that are designed to send shudders through their opponent, but these can seriously backfire. The idea to create maximum tension in the opening may be welcomed but, as noted in rule 1, you have to make sure that if an opponent spots your tricky line, the alternative doesn't mean that your position is suddenly in ruins.

Here is a shining example of how a

relatively little known opening called the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit can work wonders:

Game 15 A.Glenzer-U.Ickler Essen 2005 *Blackmar-Diemer Gambit*

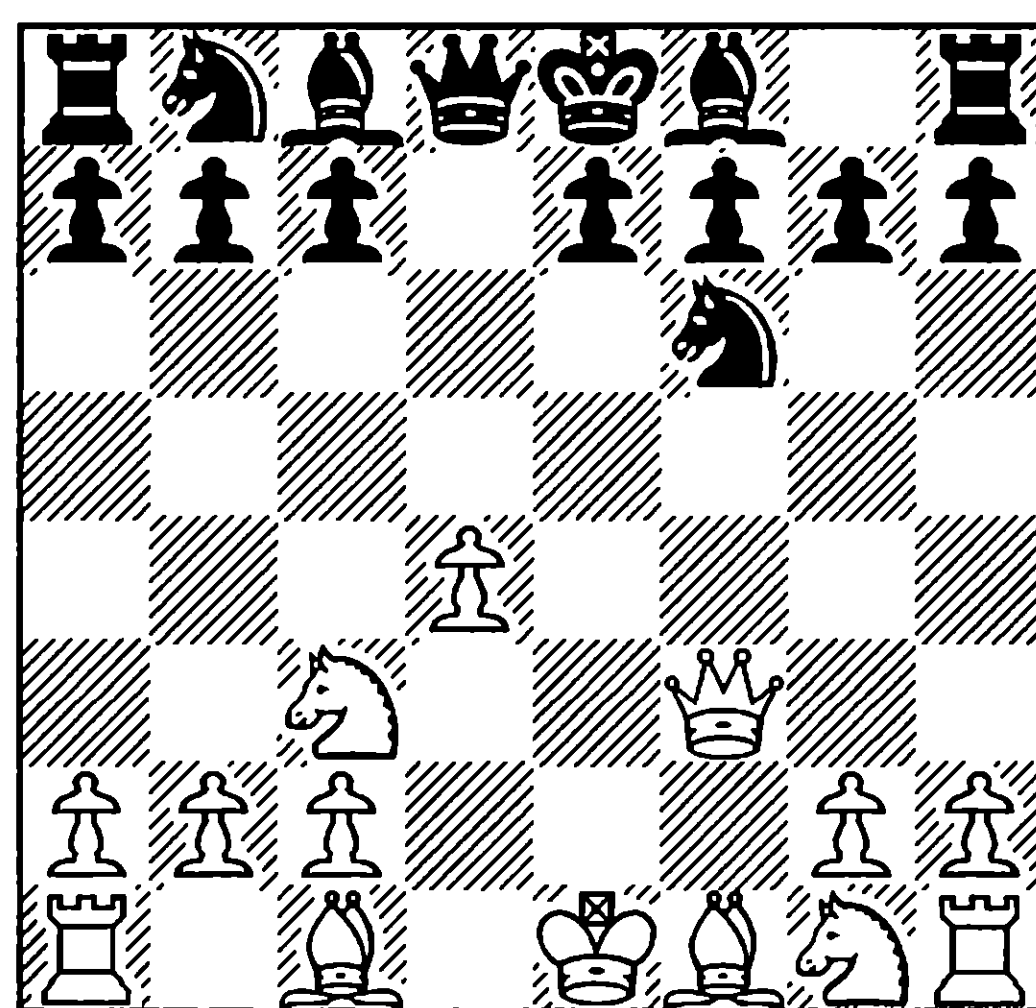
1 e4 d5 2 d4 dxe4 3 ♘c3

In the 1880s the American A.E.Blackmar promoted the gambit by playing and writing about 3 f3, but eventually it was discovered that 3...e5 is a good reply.

3...♘f6 4 f3

This is the line played extensively by the German Emil Josef Diemer, who was so convinced of White's potential success in this opening that he wrote a book called *Towards checkmate from the first move*.

4...exf3 5 ♔xf3?!



This is known as the Ryder Gambit by connoisseurs of the opening. It is an outrageous reply because it sacrifices

another pawn. The alternative 5 ♘xf3 is more sensible, developing another piece in preparation for short castling, after which the king's rook has some chances of using the semi-open f-file for attacking purposes.

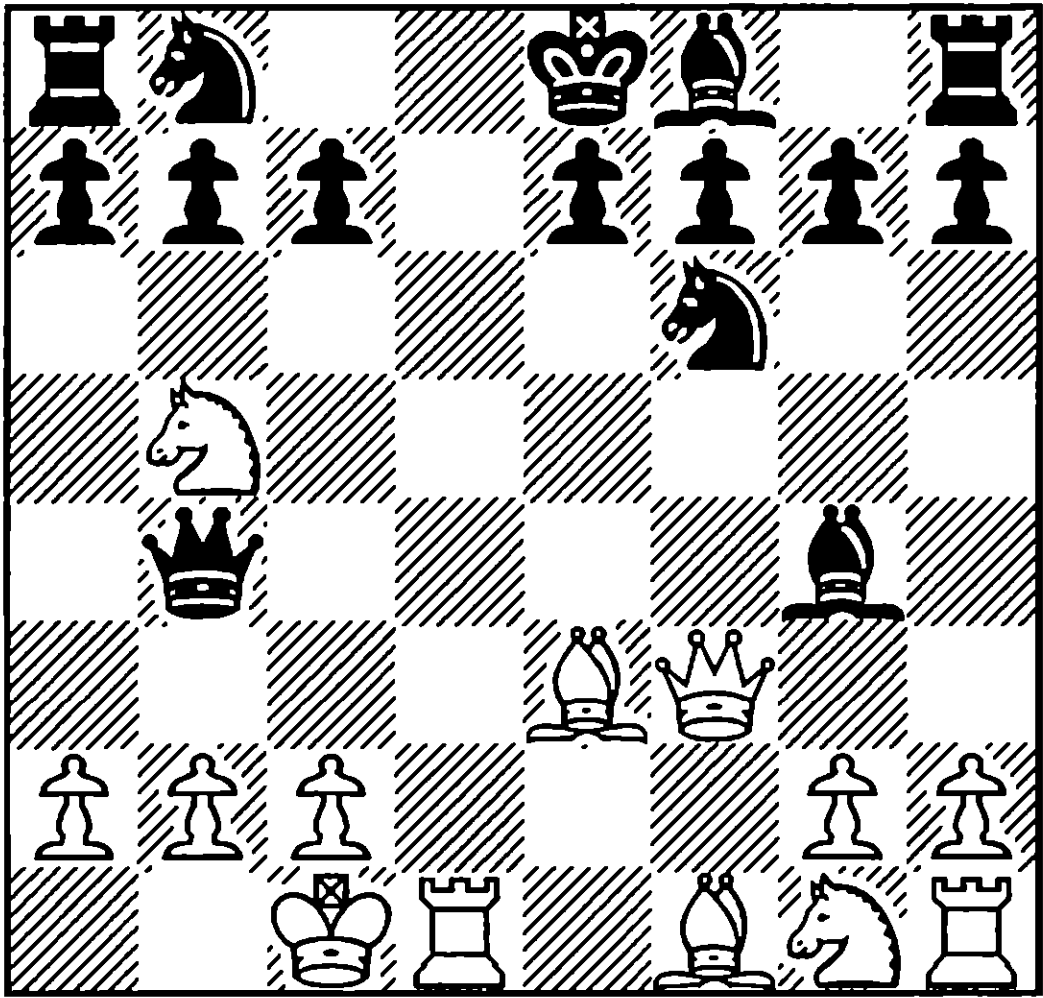
5...♙xd4 6 ♖e3 ♙b4?!

White relies on Black being greedy and willing to try and pick up more material in the opening by coveting the b2-pawn.

7 0-0-0 ♖g4?

Black spots a chance to win material and goes for it.

8 ♘b5!!



This is the stunning move which signals the Halosar Trap. The intention is that if the queen is taken with 8...♖xf3 then 9 ♘xc7 is mate. The top grandmaster Julian Hodgson described it as a “brilliant refutation” when he saw it in a recent game. It was left to a Blackmar-Diemer Gambit expert to point out that it was first played by Diemer in 1934.

8...♙a5

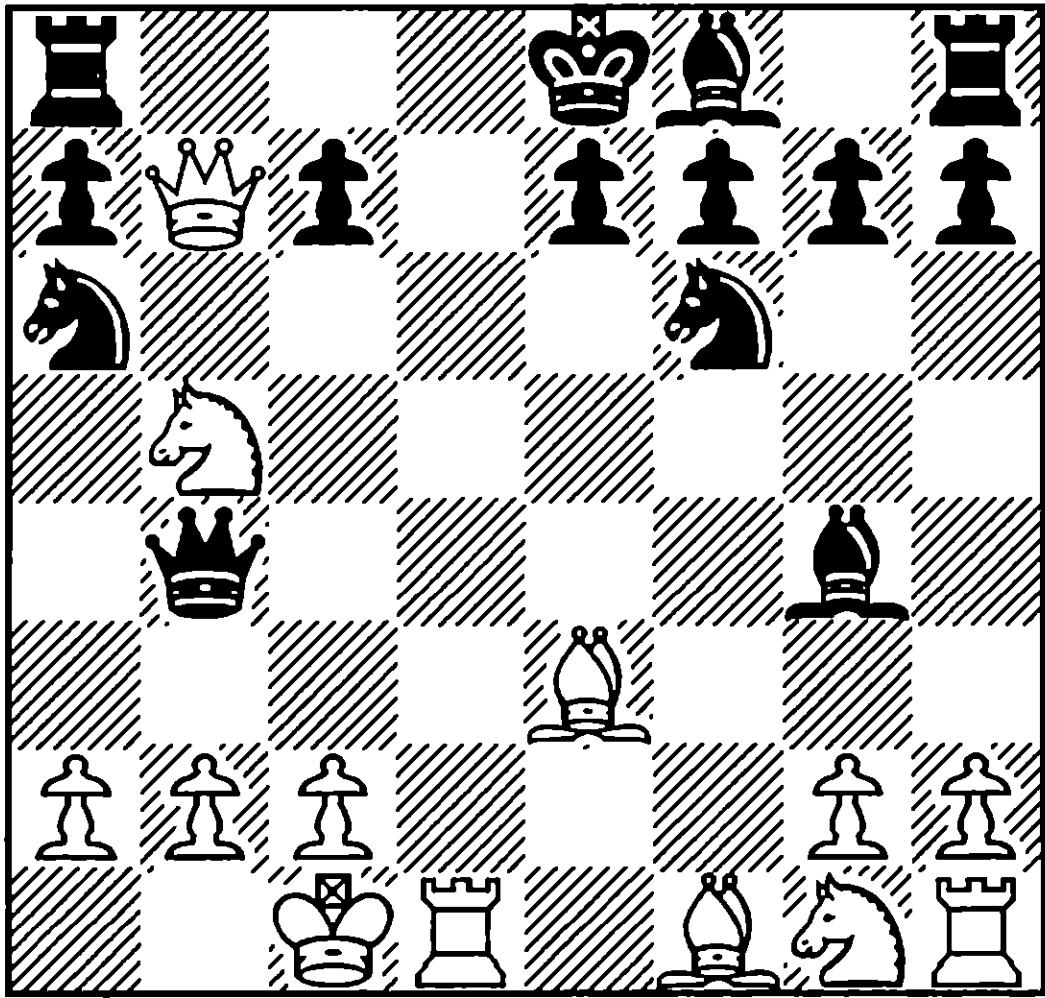
Other moves also cause some dis-

tress for Black and I have made a point in refuting them just in case anyone is daring enough to play this line:

a) 8...♘bd7 9 ♙xb7 ♙e4 10 ♙xe4 ♘xe4 11 ♖d4! is very strong in view of 11...♘ef6 12 ♘xc7+ ♔d8 13 ♘xa8 ♙c8 14 ♖e2 winning easily.

b) 8...e5 9 ♘xc7+ ♔e7 10 ♙xb7! (White expects to play such amazing moves in the Blackmar-Diemer) 10...♙xb7 11 ♖c5 mate, J.Cullum-J.Wojtowicz, correspondence 1965.

c) 8...♘a6 9 ♙xb7 and now:



c1) 9...♖xd1? 10 ♙xa8+ ♔d7 11 ♘xa7 ♙e1 12 ♖b5+ c6 13 ♙xc6+ 1-0 K.Simler-G.Augusts, USA 1993.

c2) 9...♙e4 is the best of the bunch of miserable replies, but White still comes out on top after 10 ♙xa6 ♙xe3+ 11 ♔b1 ♙c5 (or 11...♖xd1 12 ♙c6+ ♔d8 13 ♙xc7+ ♔e8 14 ♘d6+! exd6 15 ♖b5+ ♘d7 16 ♙xd7 mate) 12 ♙b7! ♖xd1 13 ♙xa8+ ♔d7 14 ♘c3 ♖g4 15 ♘f3 with a winning position.

9 ♙xb7 1-0

This is certainly a fun opening and a

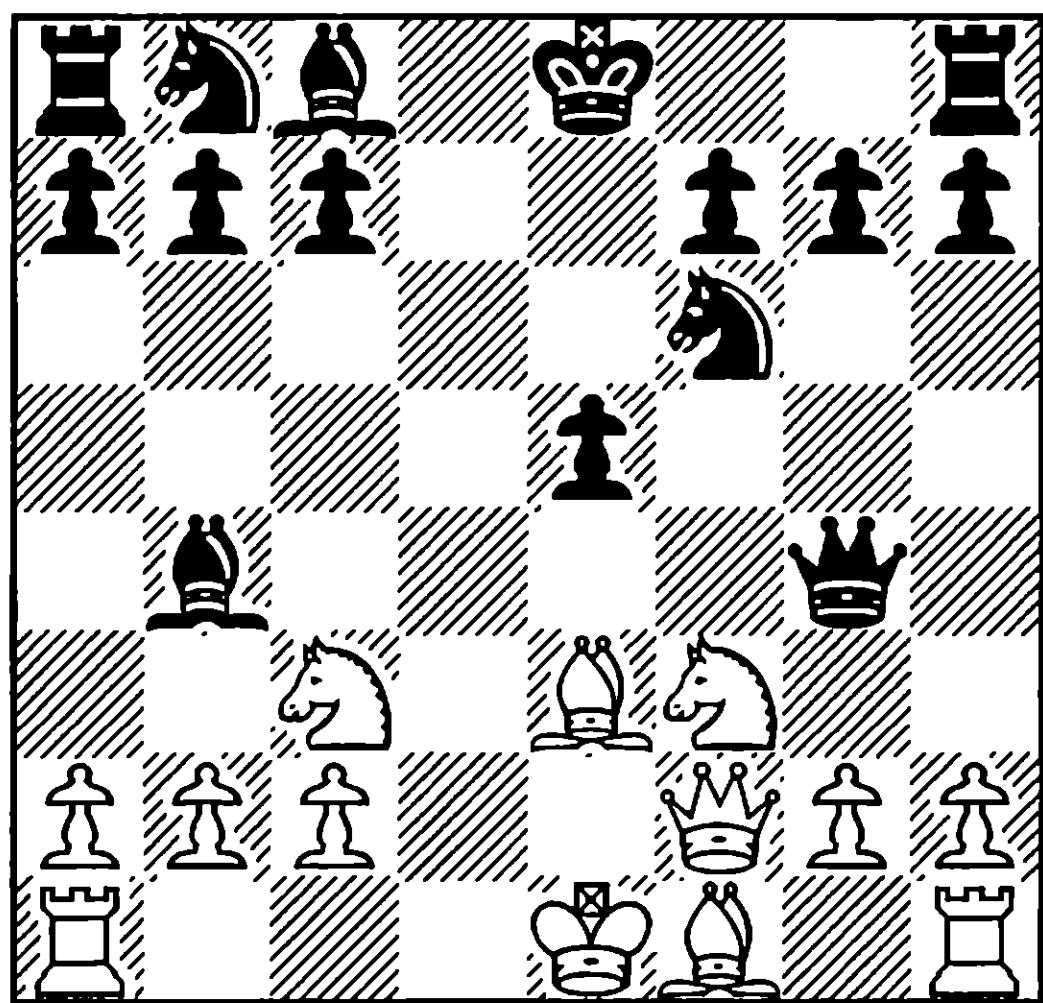
great one to play on the Internet in quick games. However, the line with 5 ♖xf3 does not really hold up under scrutiny, which means that in club or tournament games opponents will soon look up how to deal with the trap and you will be unable to replicate such a brilliant victory.

The refutation – analysis

1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 f3 exf3 5 ♖xf3 ♕xd4 6 ♙e3 ♕g4!

Two pawns up, it makes sense for Black to give up attacking ambitions and be happy to enter a winning ending.

7 ♖f2 e5 8 ♘f3 ♙b4!



The pin on the knight will put off White from castling queenside because Black will simply exchange pieces on c3 and shatter the defensive pawns. The quiet alternative 8...♙d6 is also a safe and steady response with advantage to Black; for instance, 9 0-0-0 0-0 and eventually the material advantage will make a difference.

9 ♗xe5 ♕e4 10 ♗c4 b5!

A simple tactic designed to shoo the knight away from c4 so that the fork ...♘g4 can win material, and it dramatically tips the game heavily in Black's favour.

11 ♙d3?

Or 11 ♘d2 ♕xc2 12 ♙xb5+? (12 ♙c5! a5 still favours Black) 12...c6 13 ♙e2 ♕xb2 and it is time to go home.

11...♕e6 12 ♘d2 ♘g4

And Black wins a piece.

I really think it is a mistake to play an opening that contains a trick or two but all ends in tears if they don't come off. Here is another example of a risky opening choice:

Game 16 A.Gkountintas-W.Ward Sheffield 1991 Scandinavian Defence

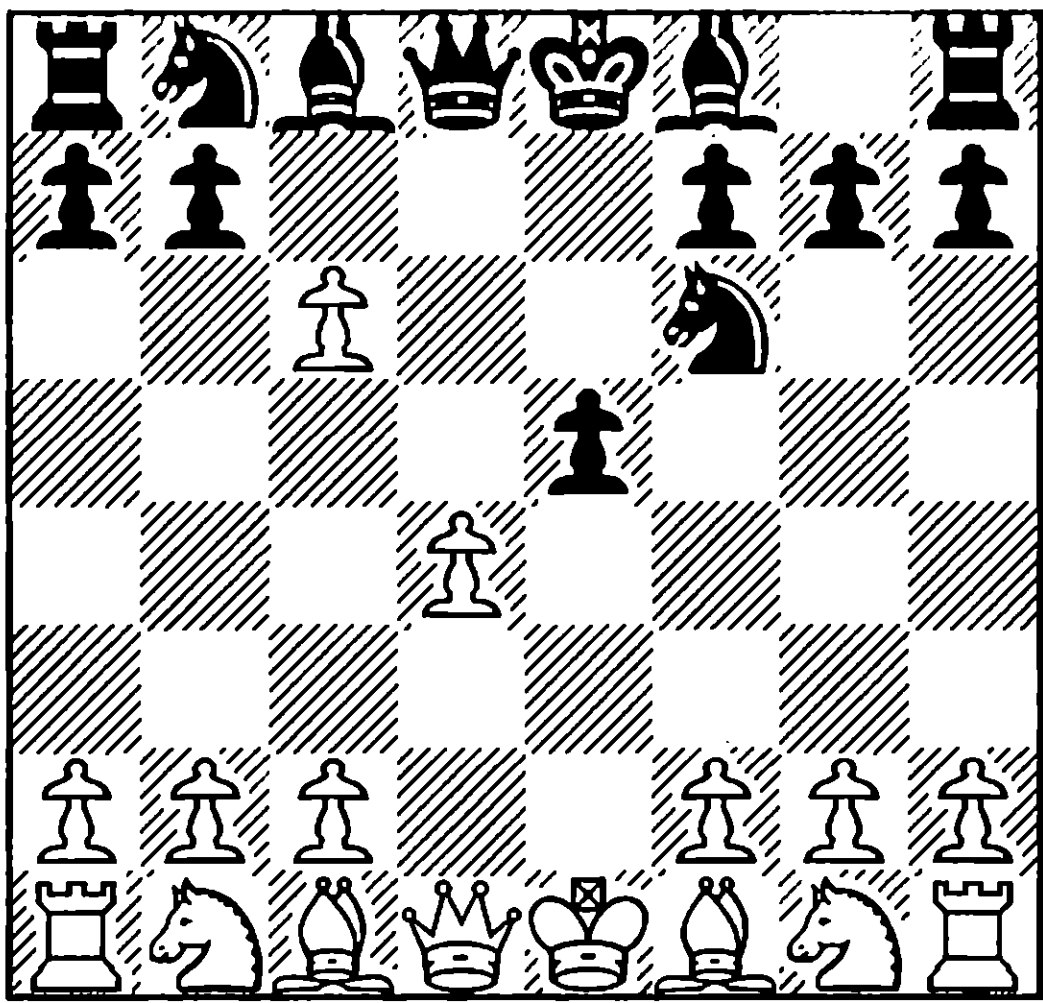
1 e4 d5

This signals the Scandinavian (also known as the Centre-Counter), which is ideal for players with limited time to study because you manage to get your opening on the board immediately.

2 exd5 ♘f6 3 d4 c6!?

A little bit unusual, but offering the gambit pawn to allow the knight to develop to c6 has been tried and tested. The main lines are considered to be 3...♕xd5 and 3...♗xd5.

4 dxc6 e5?



Such a move certainly deserves 10/10 for originality, in my opinion, because I don't think anyone would expect another pawn to be offered. A potential delight on the internet where it would gain valuable time, it also does the trick in club chess where confusion reigns each time it appears on the board. If someone is looking for a name then try the Woodseats Variation, after Bill Ward's club where it is played seemingly non-stop by the man himself. Of course, if you look up this line all the focus is on 4...xc6, which is favoured by gambit players who wish to gain time developing.

5 dxe5

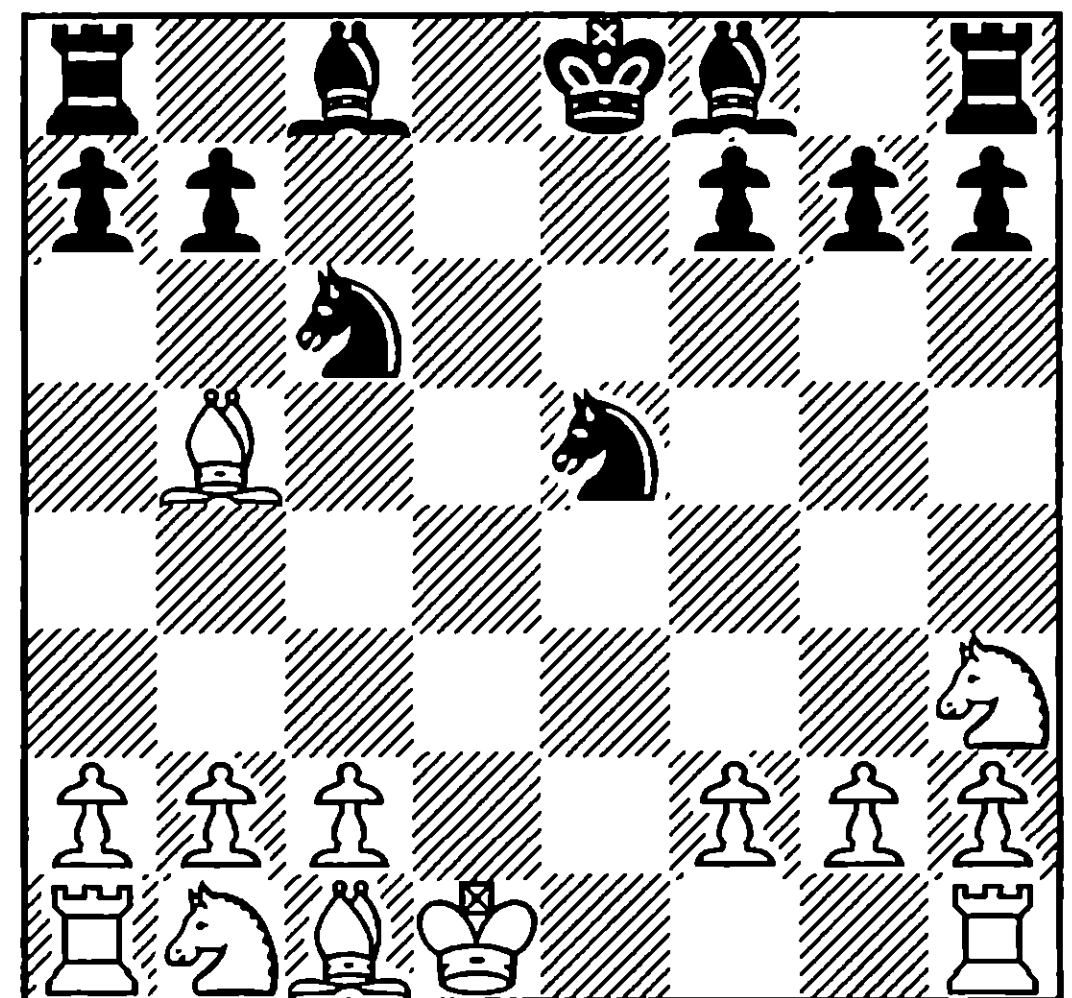
In the game Mursal-W.Ward, Sheffield League 2006, White refused the offer of an extra pawn with 5 h3 and play continued 5...xc6 6 b5 d5?! (6...g4! is relatively best, when a sample line runs 7 0-0 exd4 8 h3 xf3 9 xf3 d7 10 e1+ e7 11 g5 with an edge, but more importantly Black is not a pawn down) 7 c4 (7 c3! is a sterner test in view of 7...b4 8 xc6+

bxc6 9 0-0 with excellent chances) 7...e4+ 8 e2 xe2+ 9 ex2 exd4 10 dxd4 led to better chances for White.

5...xd1+ 6 cxd1 g4 7 h3!?

I suspect that 7 cxb7! must be best in order to accumulate more pawns, when 7...xb7 8 h3 xe5 gives Black some active play thanks to the influence of the light-squared bishop and White's poorly placed king. However, White is two pawns up and must be favourite in the ending once he fends off Black's initiative.

7...xc6 8 b5 gxe5



After starting with a mad opening variation Black has managed to achieve a position where he already has enough compensation for the pawn. This is due to the fact that he can develop smoothly with ...g4 followed by ...0-0-0 to take advantage of White's poor king placement.

9 e1

9 e3, making way for the king to seek shelter on c1, is a possible alternative.

9...g4+ 10 e2

Blocking the check by 10 f4 allows 10...0-0-0 11 ♖d2 ♗xf4 12 gxf3 ♗xf3 which is good for Black.

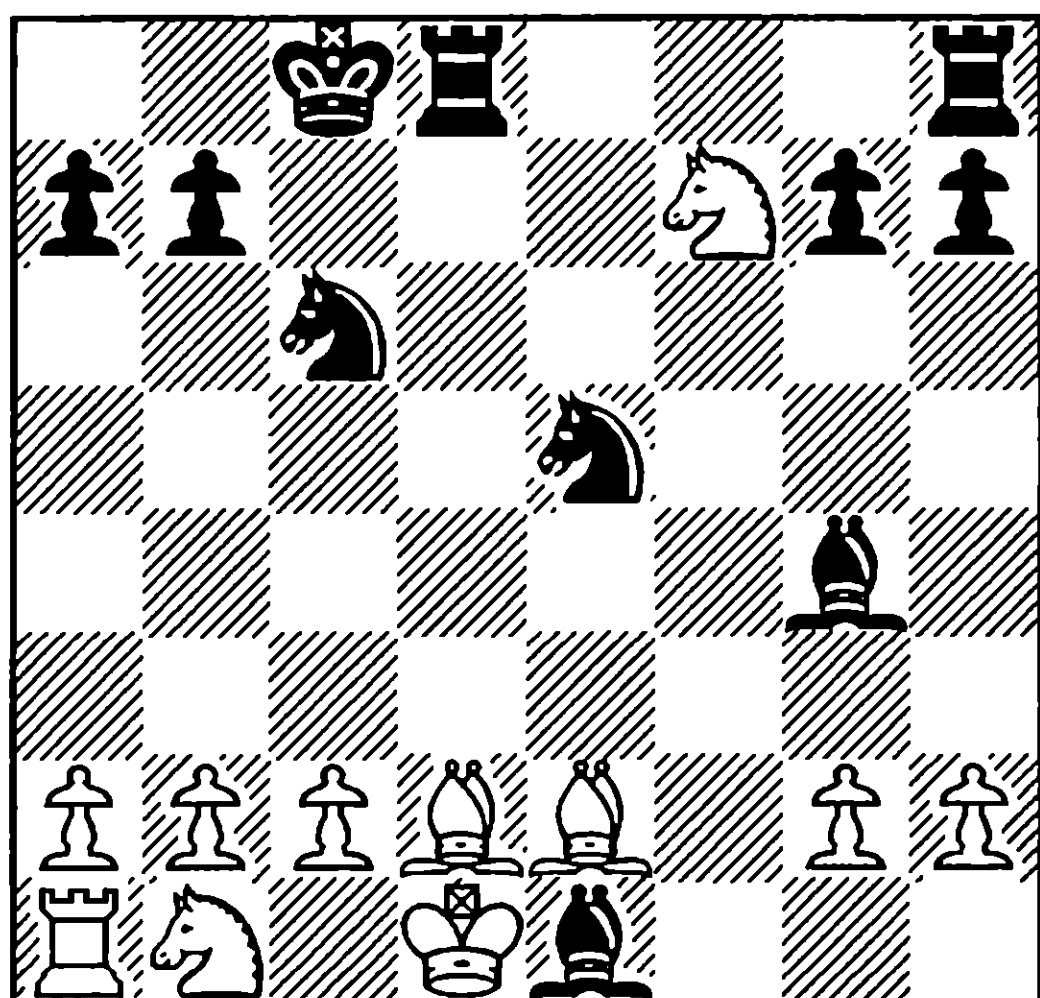
10...0-0-0+ 11 ♖d2 ♗c5

The opening has worked out well for Black who has maintained his lead in development and can now pursue tactical chances.

12 ♗g5?!

But if 12 f4, then 12...♙xe2+ 13 ♖xe2 ♘c4 14 b3 ♘e3+ 15 ♔c1 ♖he8 maintains Black's initiative.

12...♙xf2 13 ♘xf7 ♙xe1



14 ♘xd8

After 14 ♙xg4+? ♘xg4 15 ♘xd8 ♖xd8 16 ♔xe1 Black finds a way to stretch the white king by troubling him with the dashing knights: 16...♘d4! 17 ♗a3 ♖e8+ 18 ♔d1? ♗f2+ 19 ♔c1 ♗e2+ 20 ♔b1 ♖d8 21 ♘c4 ♗e4, winning a piece, while 18 ♔f1 ♖f8+ 19 ♔e1 ♖f2 also favours Black.

14...♖xd8 15 ♙xg4+?

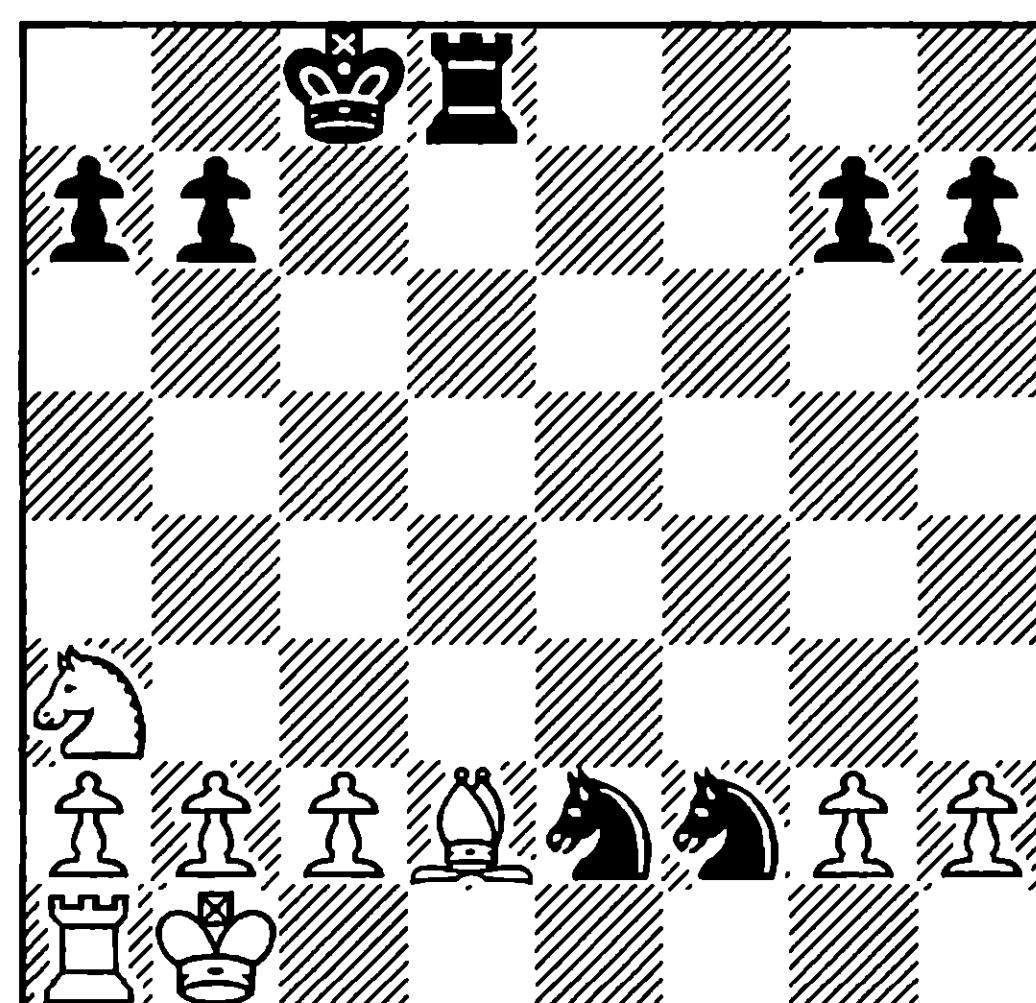
It is a mistake to encourage the black knights to attack. However, White's lack of development constantly gives him problems because 15 ♔xe1

runs into 15...♙xe2 16 ♙xe2 ♗d4+ 17 ♗d1 ♖f8!, intending ♖f1+, followed by trying to take the kingside pawns. For example: 18 ♙c3 ♖f1+ 19 ♔d2 (19 ♙e1 allows 19...♘c4! winning easily due to the threats of ...♘xb2+ and ...♘ce3+) 19...♘c4+ 20 ♔d3 ♖d1+ 21 ♔xc4 ♘xc2 winning.

15...♘xg4 16 ♔xe1 ♘d4 17 ♗a3

After 17 ♔d1 ♖f8 I can't see how White survives. For instance: 18 ♘c3 ♖f1+ 19 ♙e1 ♗e3+ 20 ♔d2 ♘xg2, when White should put the pieces back in the box.

17...♖e8+ 18 ♔d1 ♗f2+ 19 ♔c1 ♗e2+ 20 ♔b1 ♖d8



A funny-looking position. The pair of threatening knights on the second rank help Black to secure victory.

21 ♘c4 b5 22 b4 bxc4 0-1

An impressive performance by Black but it can mask the objective reality of what the opening offers to an attacking player. Yes, you might play a few spectacular games, but in the long run your results will diminish when people

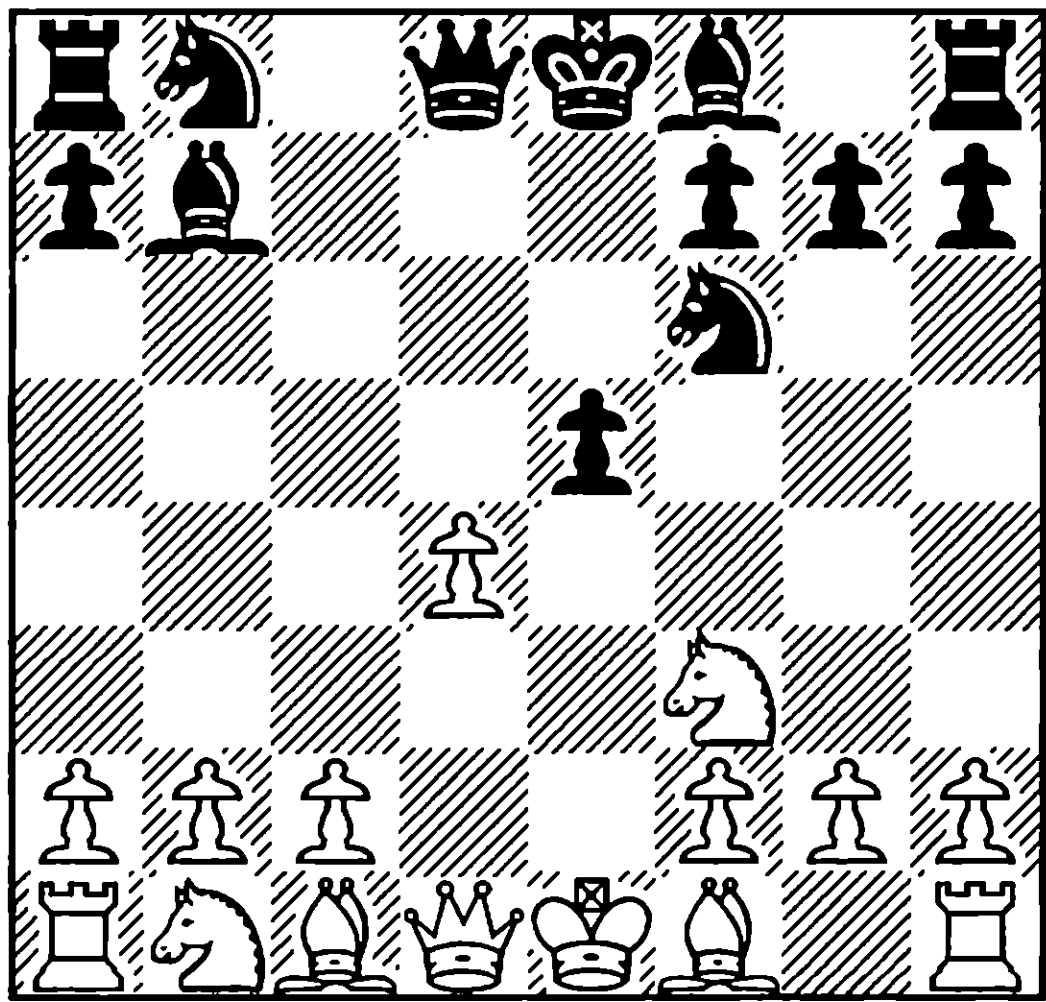
get wise as to what to do. Some players are content with poor openings, which is fine when you only play casually for fun. However, playing something a little more reliable will still allow you to attack, the difference with the above game being that you won't be two pawns down.

The refutation – analysis

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♘f6 3 d4 c6 4 dxc6 e5 5 cxb7

I think it is wise to take another pawn to ensure a material advantage.

5...♙xb7 6 ♘f3!



A key move which really puts the credibility of Black's opening under severe pressure: rather than accepting the final pawn offer on e5 White sensibly develops a piece. Instead, after 6 dxe5 ♙xd1+ 7 ♙xd1 ♘g4 Black manages to regain one pawn, when his active pieces and the exposed white king give him some compensation for the material deficit.

The knight to f3 is certainly an im-

provement on the game G.Smith W.Ward, Sheffield League 2006, which saw 6 ♙e3 ♘c6 7 c3 exd4 8 ♙xd4 ♘xd4 9 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 10 cxd4 ♙b4+ 11 ♘c1 0-0-0 12 0-0-0 and now, instead of 12...♘g4? 13 ♘h3 with advantage to White, Black should have played 12...♙xc3! 13 bxc3 ♘e4! when the threats to c3 and f2 make the difference, with decent chances despite the material deficit.

6...♘c6

The alternatives do not inspire much confidence in Black's position either:

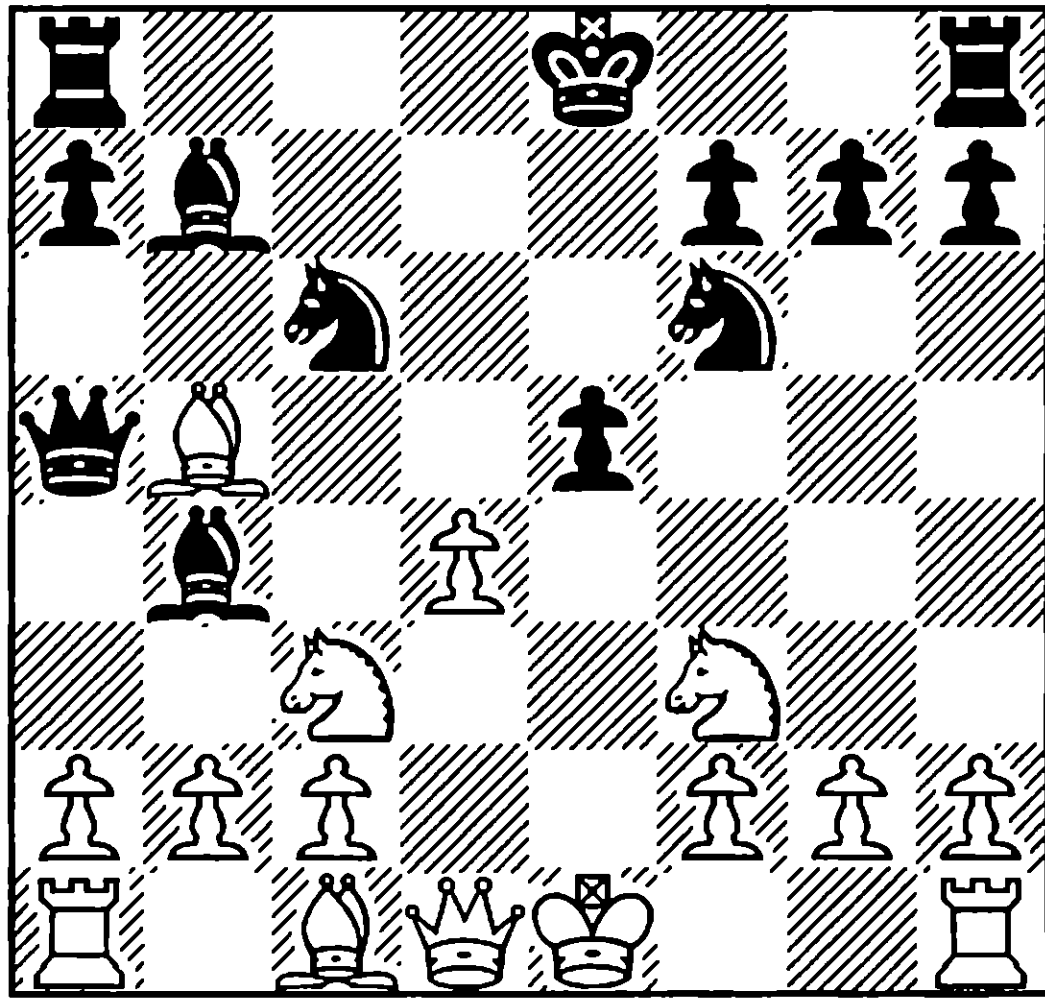
a) 6...♙xf3 7 ♙xf3 e4 8 ♙b5+ ♘bd7 9 ♙g3 with a clear advantage.

b) 6...exd4 7 ♙b5+ ♘bd7 8 0-0 ♙e7 9 ♘xd4 and White is on top.

7 ♙b5

The bishop pins the knight to reduce Black's options and paves the way for kingside castling.

7...♙a5+ 8 ♘c3 ♙b4



9 0-0!

The king whisks to safety and the ensuing tactics are good for White.

The big problem for Black is that if he fails to cause maximum impact in the opening he is simply a couple of pawns down.

9...♙xc3 10 ♙xc6+ ♙xc6 11 bxc3 ♙xc3

Black has to go for it to justify his outlandish opening, which makes it a risky business. Otherwise 11...♙xf3 12 ♙xf3 e4 13 ♙g3 leaves him in disarray.
12 dxe5 ♙xf3

The greedy 12...♙xa1? is refuted by the stunning 13 ♙d6!, when Black's king is in big trouble. For instance: 13...♙xf3 14 exf6 ♙xf6 15 ♖e1+ winning.

13 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 14 gxf3 ♘d7 15 ♖e1

It is time for Black to count the pawns and be afraid.

The *Woodseats Variation* is so wild it should be avoided in tournaments, though it will surely do well in blitz games on the internet.

The Latvian Gambit is one of those high-risk openings that have the credibility of occasionally being employed by masters. It has a reputation amongst its supporters of being sharp and full of complications. What is the best way to beat it? Well, you could take on the tricky main line and engage in complex attacks where both players have some wonderful potential for checkmate. The practical problem as White is that you are only likely to take on the opening once or twice a year, if that, while your opponent may very well be an expert on such a main line.

After all, he is the one who plays it all the time so it makes sense that the fun variation with mating possibilities will get all the attention.

It is for this reason that, when I have to face the Latvian, I choose a line where White can only expect to have a small plus in the opening but, more importantly, Black is prevented from getting the sort of position he or she might relish. The decision to rebuff Black's potential attack in the opening allows White to dictate the middle-game.

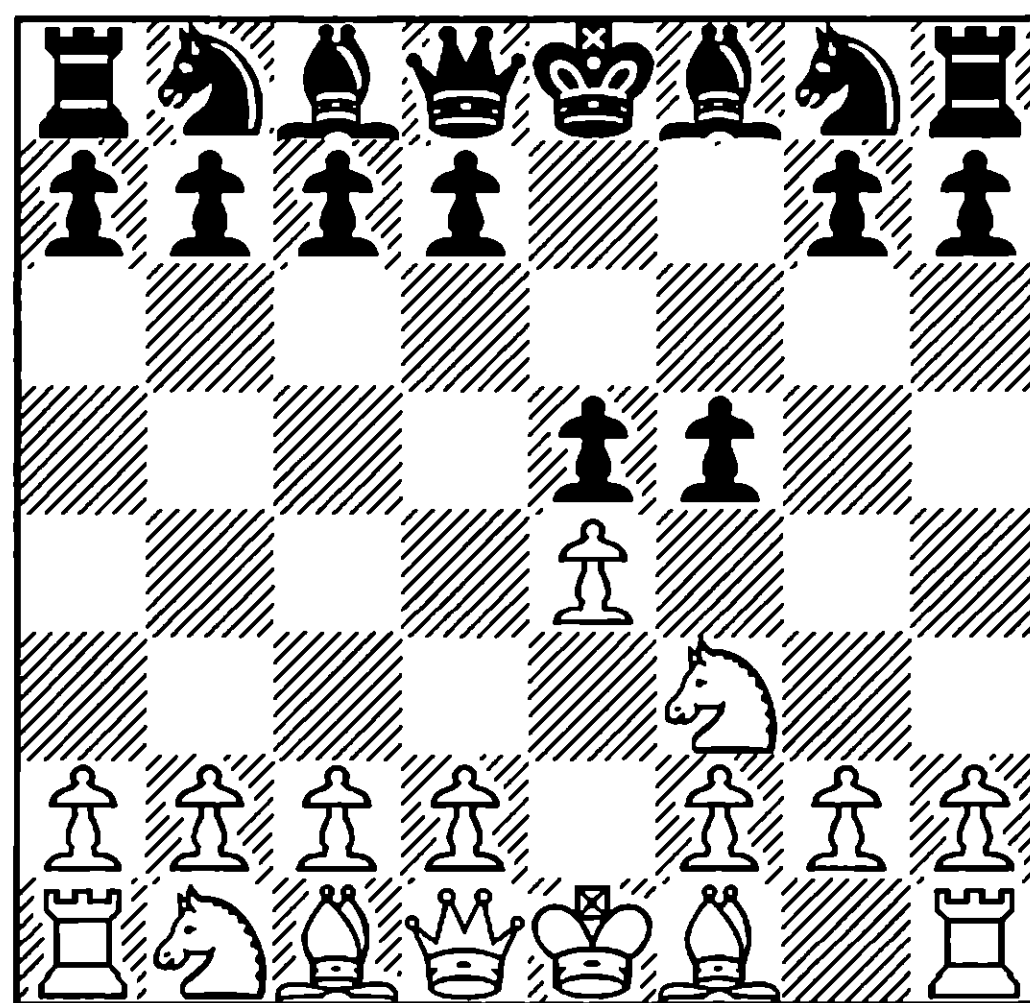
Game 17

G.Lane-M.Wojnar

Queenstown 2006

Latvian Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 f5



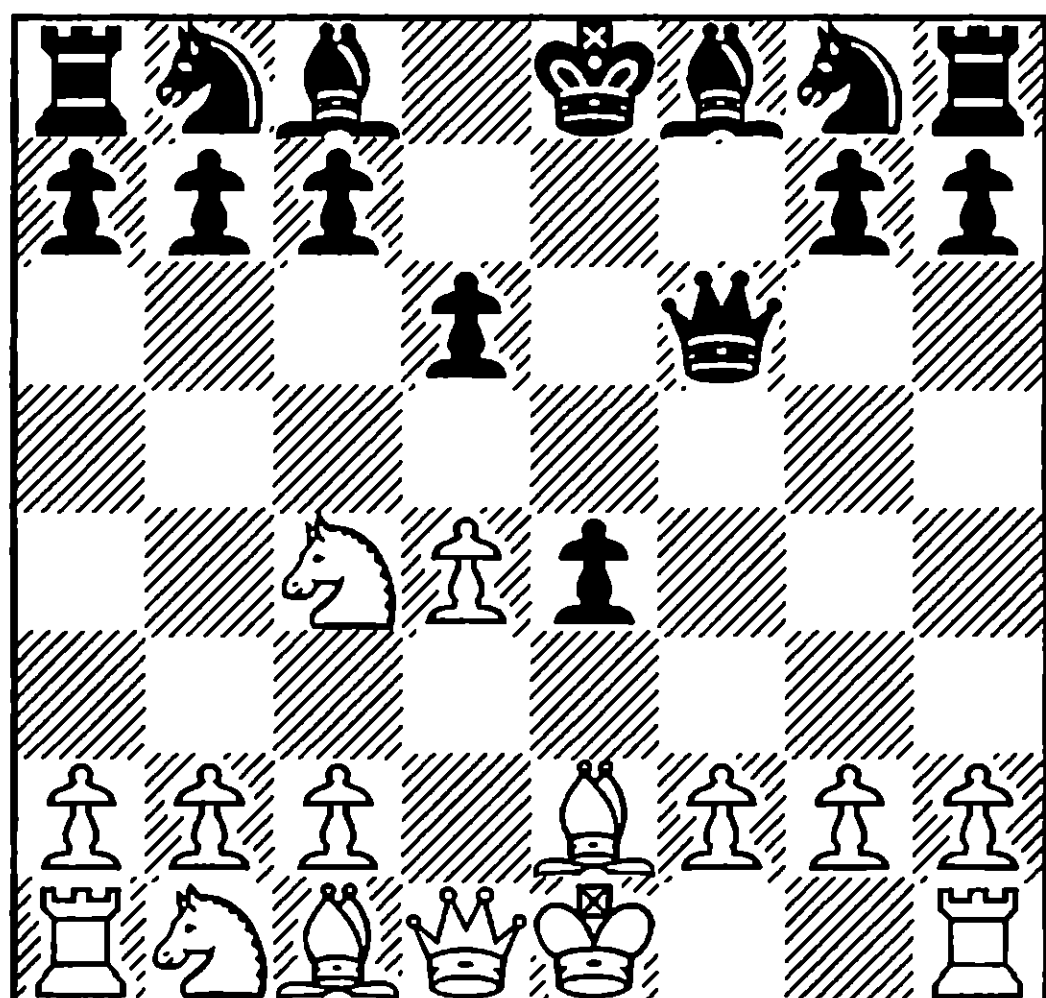
The Latvian Gambit is launched and Black is obviously keen to stir up complications as soon as possible, because he is effectively playing the King's Gambit (1 e4 e5 2 f4) with colours re-

versed. This has the merit of allowing Black to avoid learning standard lines such as the Ruy Lopez or the Scotch, but the downside that if White knows what he is doing then Black should struggle. The Latvian used to be known as the Greco Counter-Gambit after the famous Italian player Gioacchino Greco (1600-1634), but not surprisingly over time others have contributed analysis, in particular the Latvian writer Karlis Betins and others from his country, who have been rewarded for playing and promoting the opening.

3 ♖xe5

Black may well be playing the King's Gambit with colours reversed, so it makes sense to use White's extra developing move to seize the pawn. The fun line that Black players tend to analyse in depth, and which is supported by numerous correspondence games, starts with 3 ♖c4 and a sample line runs 3...fxe4 4 ♘xe5 d5 5 ♙h5+ g6 6 ♘xg6 hxg6 7 ♙xg6+ ♔d7 8 ♖xd5 ♘f6 with delightful complications.

3...♙f6 4 d4 d6 5 ♘c4 fxe4 6 ♖e2!?



I like to take Black out of the comfort zone, so rejected the standard move 6 ♘c3 which is routinely met by 6...♙g6 and then:

a) 7 f3 ♘f6 8 fxe4 ♖e7 9 ♖e3 (9 e5! is the correct approach – after almost 400 years since the game was played it is only natural there should be improvements for White) 9...♘xe4 10 ♖d3? ♙xg2 (this ancient game is the one that inspired so many imitators) 11 ♖xe4 ♖h4+ 12 ♖f2 ♙xf2 mate, Anon-G.Greco, Rome, circa 1620.

b) Rather more recently 7 ♖f4 ♘f6 8 ♘e3 ♖e7 9 ♖e2 0-0 10 ♖g3 c6 11 d5 gave White a slight initiative in S.Manole-E.Pessi, Rumanian Championship, Baile Olanesti 2010.

The advantage of 6 ♖e2 is that now 6...♙g6?? does not transpose to the other line, since 7 ♖h5! ends the game as a contest. And otherwise the queen is awkwardly placed on the f6-square where Black would prefer to develop his king's knight.

6...♘c6

If 6...♙f7, making room for the knight to come out, then 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 0-0, followed by ♖g5, will put strong pressure on the e4-pawn.

7 d5

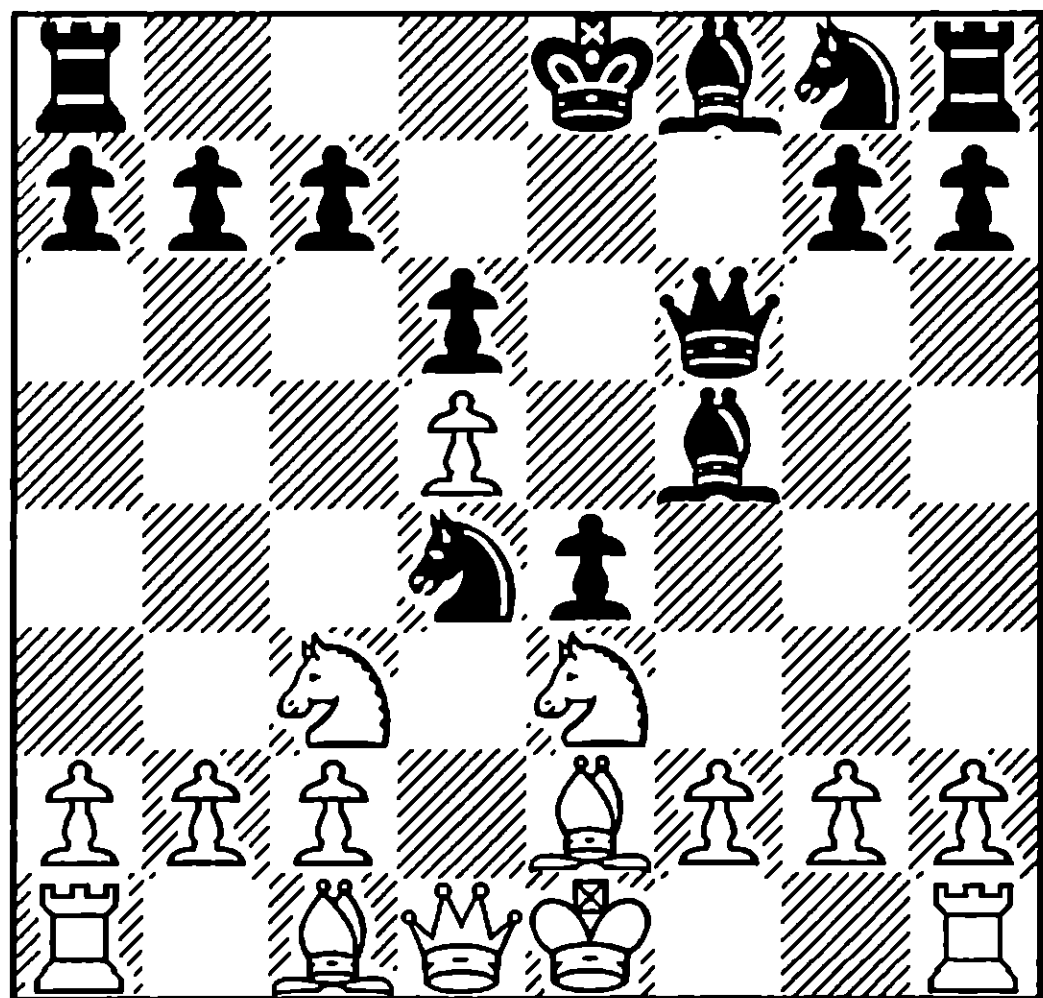
I don't want Black to catch up on development so I disrupt his pieces.

7...♘d4

After 7...♘e5 play might proceed 8 0-0 ♖f5 9 ♘c3 ♘xc4 10 ♖xc4 0-0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 (if 11...♙g6, then 12 ♙d4 and the threats against the a7 and e4-

pawns mean that White is winning) 12 f3 ♔g6 13 ♕b5 ♕h3 14 ♖e2 and White will win the pinned e-pawn.

8 ♖c3 ♕f5 9 ♗e3



The opening clash is effectively over and we are moving on to the middle-game, but my plan is still to stop Black from developing smoothly. Of course, this is not a direct plan of attack but remember that aggressive possibilities tend to multiply if the defender has pieces that lack harmony or are simply stuck on their original squares.

9...♗xe2

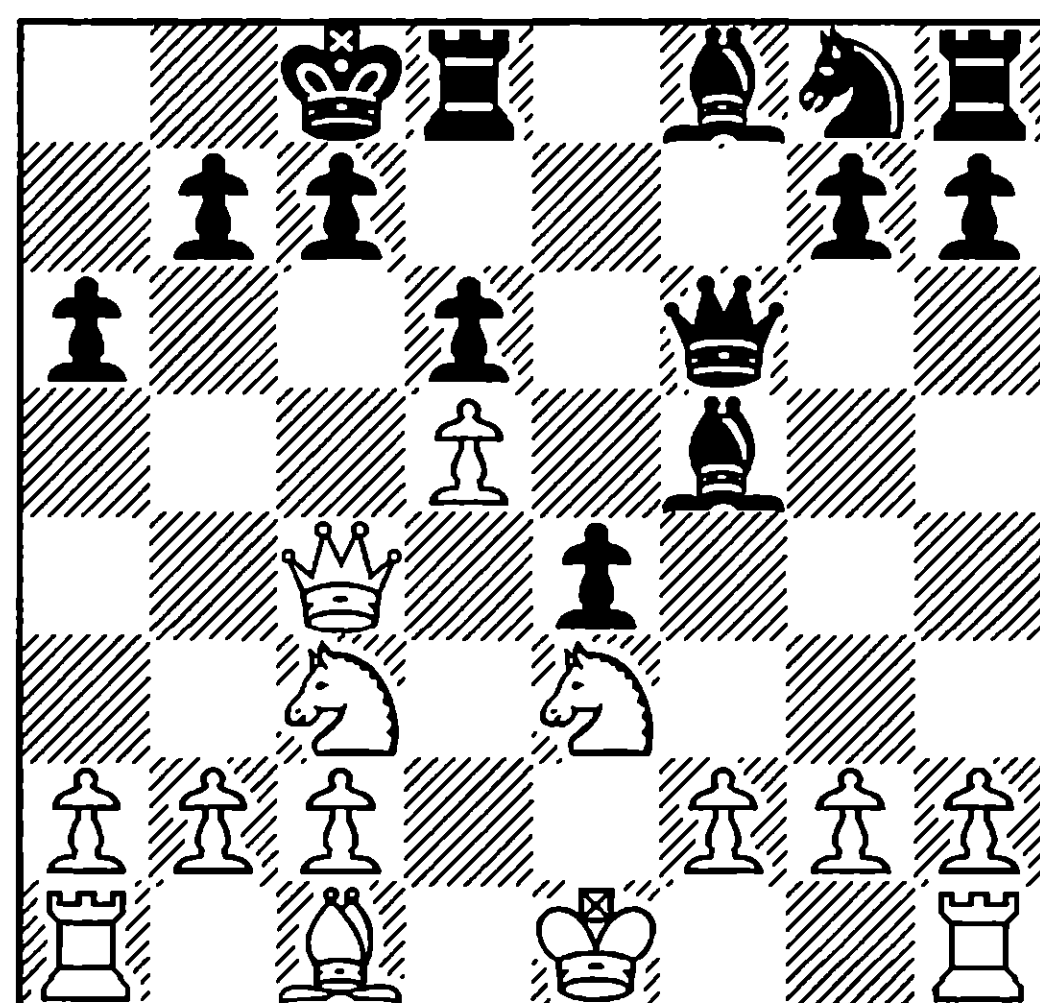
9...0-0-0 allows a forcing sequence 10 ♖g4 ♕xg4 (the queen cannot move because it must defend the knight on d4) 11 ♕xg4+ ♔b8 12 0-0 ♔e5? (the only way to hang on to the e-pawn, but pursuing that goal allows White to engineer a neat tactic) 13 ♖e1 ♗f6 14 f4! and when the black queen retreats White can safely take the knight.

10 ♔xe2 0-0-0 11 ♔c4

The queen attacks the e4-pawn but, equally importantly, is well placed to start queenside action against the

black king with the initial threat being ♗b5, attacking the a7 and c7-pawns. Here I did indeed *count the pieces* and reckoned that the queen and knight vs. the king and rook might need some reinforcements. Therefore, my basic idea is to add pawns or pieces to the onslaught in a bid to lever open Black's defensive pawn-wall.

11...a6



12 b4!?

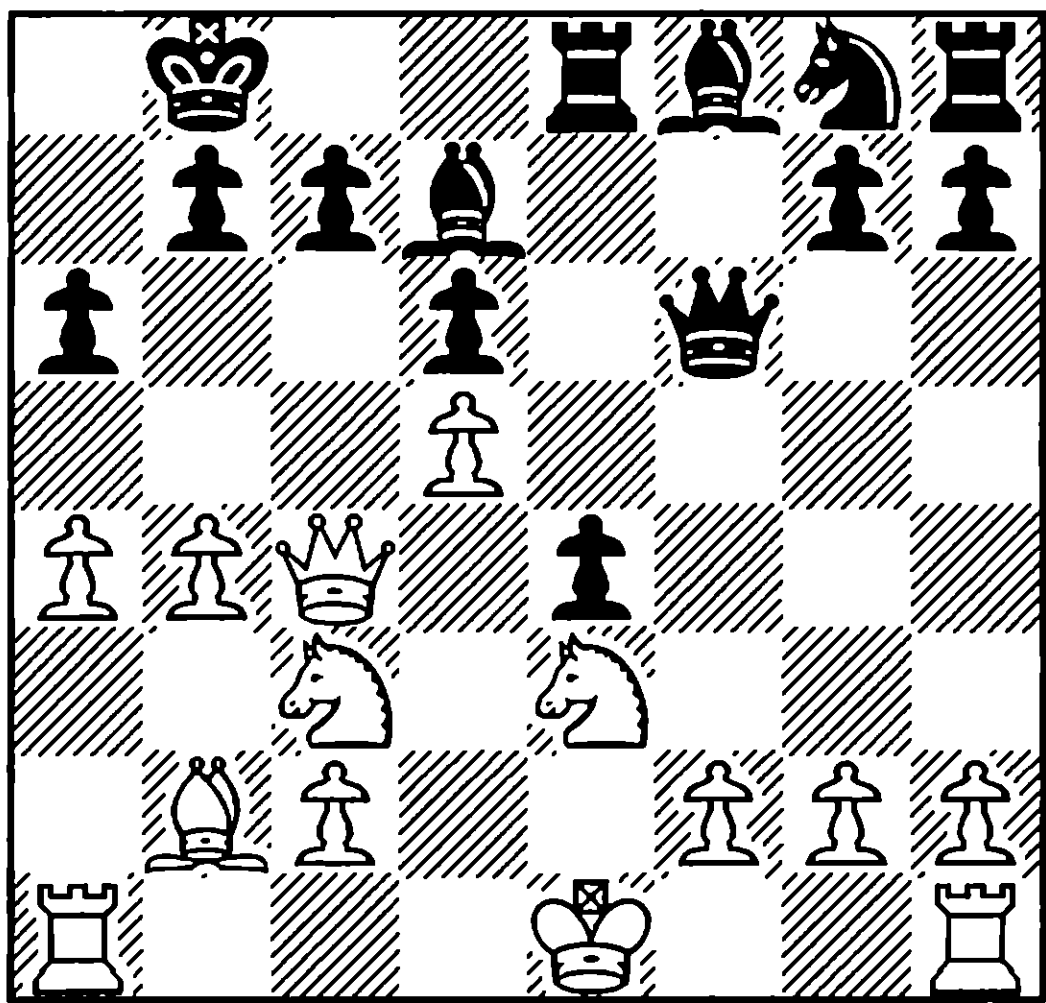
12 ♖xe4 is probably the most accurate move, but I couldn't help feeling that an open position would give my attack-minded opponent a chance to engineer some counterplay. Instead, I thought I could steadily build up my pieces on the queenside, while advancing the a- and b-pawns to persuade Black to weaken his pawns in order to avoid tactical chances. Another motivation was that I could not see any obvious way for Black to counter-attack.

12...♕d7 13 ♕b2 ♖e8 14 a4

The attack is beginning to hot up. My threat is 15 b5, when 15...a5 runs into 16 b6 ♔d8 and now 17 ♗b5 is very

strong. I could not work out exactly how I was going to make the breakthrough, but when Black has the lone bishop defending the king on the queenside that can only spell trouble.

14...♔b8



15 ♖b1

It is clear that I am adding the queen's rook to the onslaught and the aim is to strengthen the advance b4-b5. Once again, you do not have to work out intricate variations to understand that the rook, queen and knight on c3 are ready to attack, while Black just has the bishop on d7 to fend off trouble. It is three vs. one and it is only going to get worse for Black.

15...♔e7 16 b5 a5 17 b6

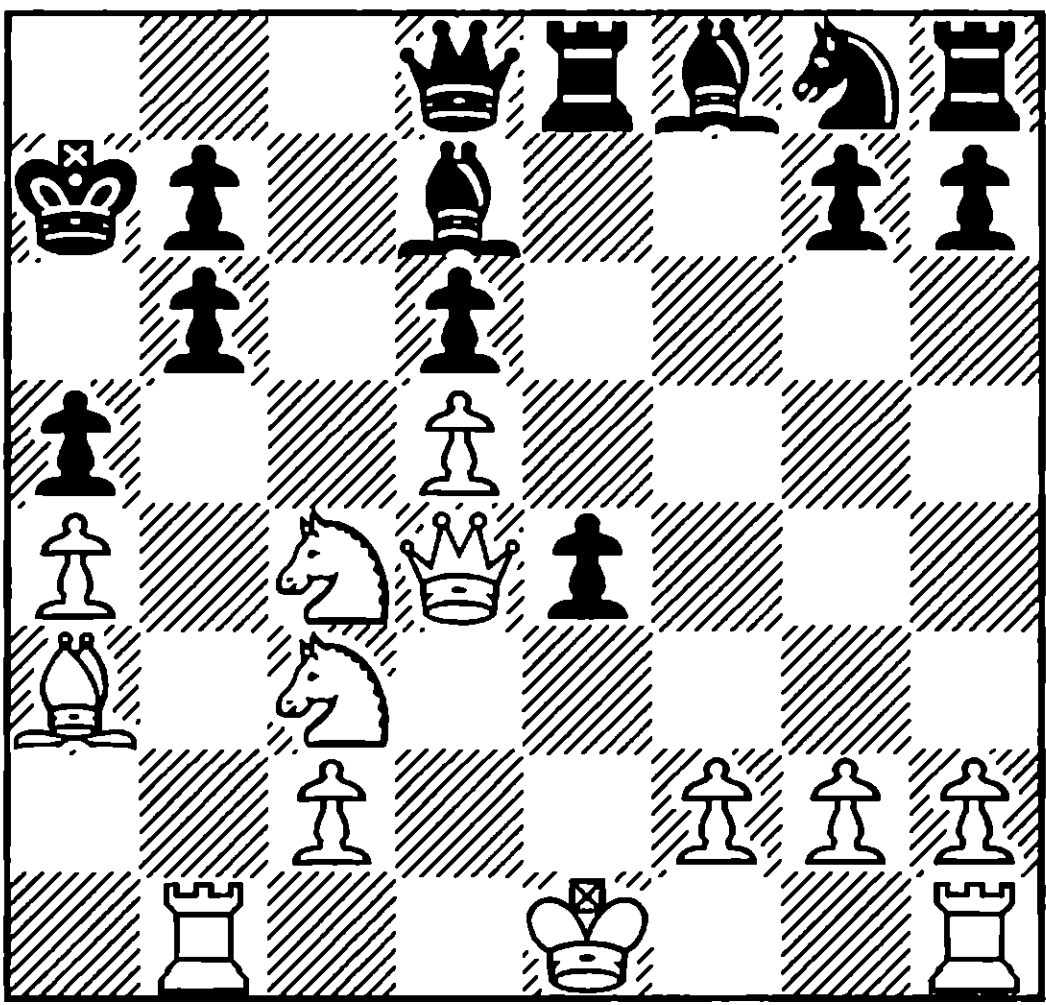
The pawn is temporarily given away to allow the rook to exert some influence on the b-file.

17...cxb6 18 ♕d4

My basic plan of adding more pieces to the attack and then advancing the queenside pawns sounds simple but it works. Now I am poised to enter the heart of Black's position on b6, so he

needs to make some belated defensive measures.

18...♔a7 19 ♕a3 ♖d8 20 ♘c4 1-0



It might seem premature to resign but Black's position is hopeless and, tellingly, his kingside pieces are still rooted to their home squares. The point is that if all his pieces were in action it would be easier to set up more defensive obstacles for me to overcome; whereas here a sample line runs 20...♘f6 21 ♖xb6 ♔a8 (to avoid the threat of discovered check) 22 0-0 threatening to double rooks on the b-file with ♖fb1 and, at my leisure, play ♘xa5 to multiply the pressure on the b7-pawn.

Choose Your Opening

"Where openings are concerned, chess masters are like a flock of sheep; everyone follows the first master's example."
– José Raúl Capablanca.

It is important to find the right opening for yourself. This can be done

by trial and error – by using an opening in local tournaments and seeing if you win many games. A safer and smarter way is to play it extensively on the internet in quick games to find out if you really like the opening. After all, many of us just copy our chess heroes by selecting their openings, but not always playing in the style of Kasparov.

A good example of how people come to select the Sicilian Dragon, for example, is to ask such players why they play this fearsomely complicated variation which requires almost complete dedication to understand the numerous sacrifices and learn a myriad of forcing lines. The answer is usually because “it has a great name”. Yes, when you are a junior anything called “Dragon” will appeal.

It is also easy to be swayed by a good experience with an opening. When I was around ten years old I was solemnly advised to take a look at the encyclopaedia *Modern Chess Openings* before I had to play someone who liked the French Defence. I noticed the Advance French (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5) was the shortest column so I decided to save time and learn that variation. I am still playing that line off and on many years later.

Warning

There is a good reason why you should test out openings beforehand: there might be a trick or trap that you are unaware of that could decide the out-

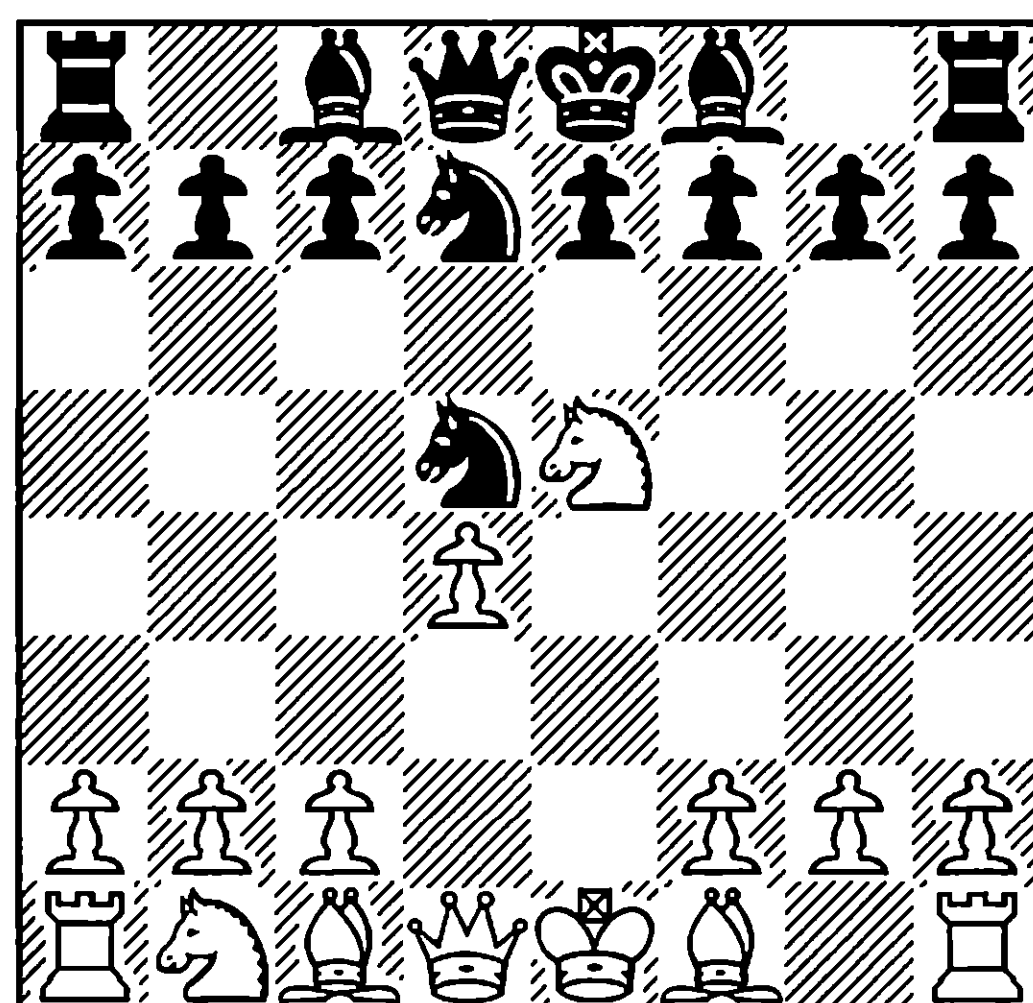
come before you even have a chance of successfully organizing an attack. I remember a friend in the 1980s who suddenly converted to the Alekhine Defence with the black pieces, especially after reading about a complicated, aggressive variation which revived a discredited line. His first game was not exactly the battling encounter he had envisaged:

Game 18 D.Smith-S.Cavannagh Torquay 1983 *Alekhine's Defence*

1 e4 ♘f6

Surprisingly, the Alekhine is the only opening named after a World Champion.

2 e5 ♘d5 3 d4 d6 4 ♗f3 dxe5 5 ♗xe5 ♘d7!?



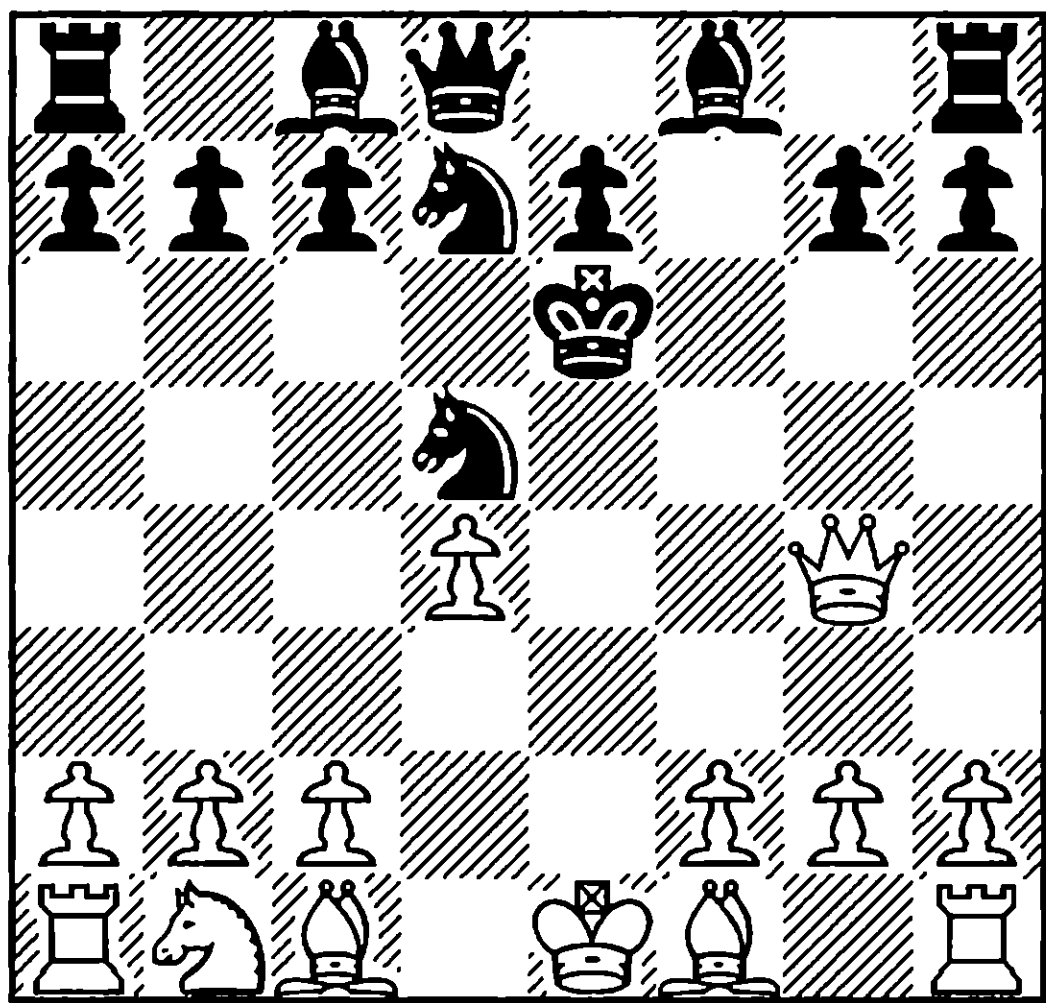
Nowadays 5...c6 and 5...g6 are considered the main lines. 5...♘d7!? is a provocative move which encourages White to go for it by sacrificing on f7.

The first time the chess world saw this being played at an elite level was during the World Championship candidates match between Larsen and Tal in 1965. The latter was White and sank into deep thought for forty-five minutes before eventually deciding to play it safe with 6 ♖c4.

6 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 7 ♜h5+ ♔e6

The king is obliged to protect the knight on d5.

8 ♜g4+!



This was when Black realized he had missed something because his much lower-rated opponent did not seem to be interested in the tricky line that he had prepared. Instead, it soon became clear that White was content with a draw by a three-time repetition of position.

The winning attempt with 8 c4 is still being debated. In R.Ivanukh-V.Shpagin, Kharkov 2009, Black tested 8...♘5f6 9 d5+ ♔d6 10 ♜f7 ♘e5 11 ♙f4 (threatening the deadly c4-c5+) 11...c5!, when play proceeded: 12 ♘c3 a6 13 0-0-0? (apparently 13 b4! is the critical

line) 13...g6 14 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 15 d6 ♙h6+! 16 ♙b1 ♜f8 17 ♜e1? (but 17 f4+ ♙xf4 18 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 19 dxe7 ♜e8 clearly favours Black with his extra piece) 17...♔xd6 18 ♜d1+ ♔c7 19 ♜xd8 ♜xf7 0-1.

8...♔f7

Black meekly has to allow White to repeat moves.

a) 8...♔f6? allows an even worse result: 9 ♜f3+ ♔e6 10 ♜e4+ ♔d6 11 c4 ♘7f6 (or 11...♘5f6 12 c5+) 12 ♜e5+ ♔c6 13 cxd5+ and White regains the piece with a strong initiative because the black king looks silly.

b) 8...♔d6? 9 c4 is also very strong because if the knight on d5 moves away then c4-c5+ is a killer check.

9 ♜h5+ ♔e6 10 ♜g4+

And it's a draw.

It is clear that you need to read up carefully on openings to avoid common mistakes.

The challenge of taking on the main lines of the open Sicilian (1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 followed by 3 d4) is huge considering the amount of books, DVDs and databases devoted to the subject. Now it might be fine for a master to preach that the only way to get to the top is to play the main lines but even the very best players vary their opening response to the Sicilian, employing such variations as the c3 Sicilian (2 c3) or the Closed Sicilian (2 ♘c3 and then g2-g3) to make it more difficult for opponents

to guess in advance what they will play.

Of course, if as a mere mortal you can take six months off from school or work, live in a cave on your own, then study and remember all the lines, you will have a bright future. The rest of us need to be clever with the limited time available to look at chess. This is the reason why anti-Sicilian lines are very popular and the argument for and against has been going on for some time.

In the 1960s the Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen, who was then one of the best players in the world, occasionally employed 2 f4 which we now regard as the Grand Prix Attack. He commented about his choice of opening in the book *How To Open a Chess Game* and his explanation is worth repeating for a new generation:

“Almost everybody plays [2 ♘f3 and] 3 d4. But isn't this a positional error? I am not joking. I like my centre pawns, and I like my d-pawn better than a c-pawn! I know that sometimes White sacrifices a knight on d5 or e6 and smashes Black before he can castle, but in the games where this has been done, haven't improvements always been found for Black afterwards? Well then, isn't 3 d4 something like a cheap trap? I know it can be combined with purely strategic ideas, but I find it easier to discuss strategy when I have an extra centre pawn!”

In other words there is nothing wrong with playing anti-Sicilian lines if

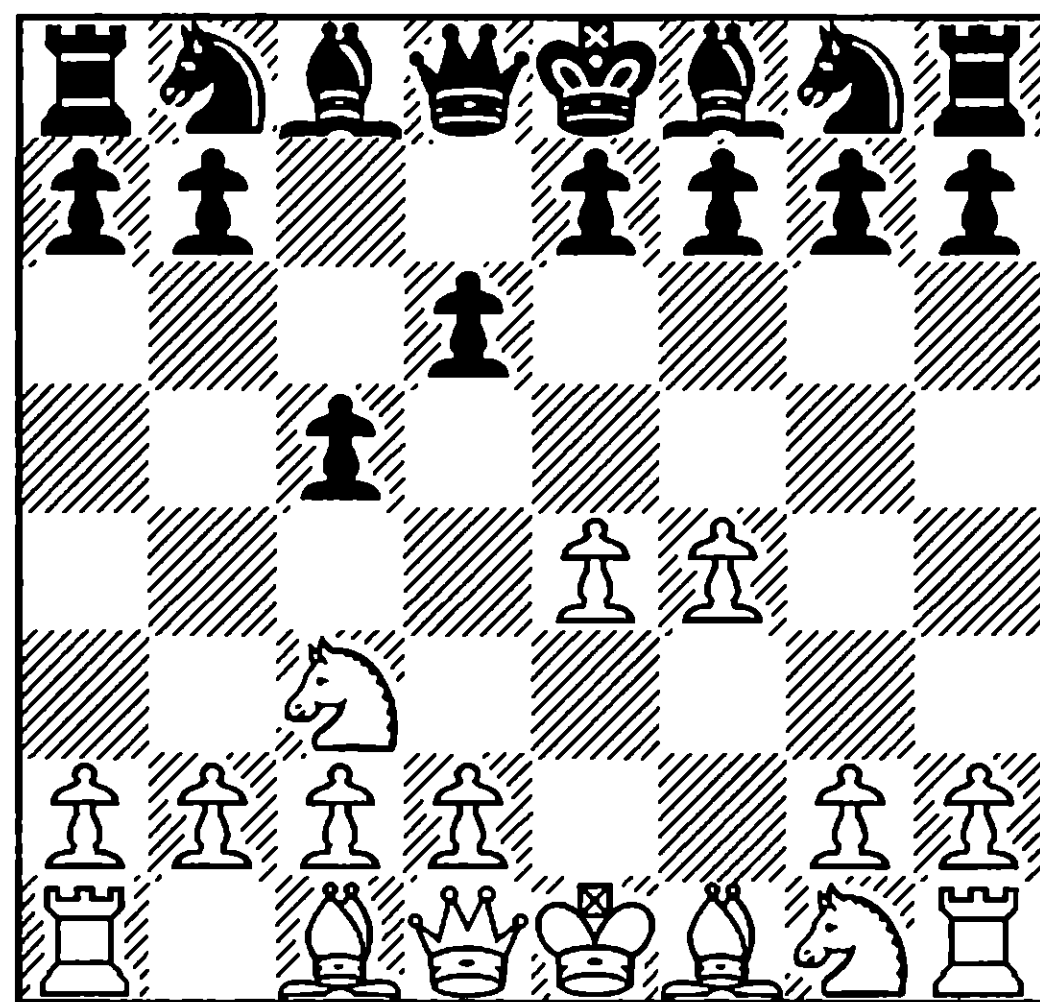
you wish to try something different. Here is an inspiring example – and I have added some detailed analysis of the pawn sacrifice in the opening in case anyone wants to copy the idea:

Game 19
G.Jones-A.Zarkaj
European Club Cup,
Kallithea 2008
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3

This is a refinement on the old line which started with 2 f4, because in time it was found that 2...d5 was a good reply.

2...d6 3 f4



The combination of ♘c3 and f2-f4 is considered the main line. The eminent chess writer Leonard Barden named it the Grand Prix Attack, because the opening was hugely successful in the 1970s and 80s in Britain's weekend tournaments, and results were accumulated to determine the most suc-

successful player of the year, in a sponsored contest known as the Grand Prix.

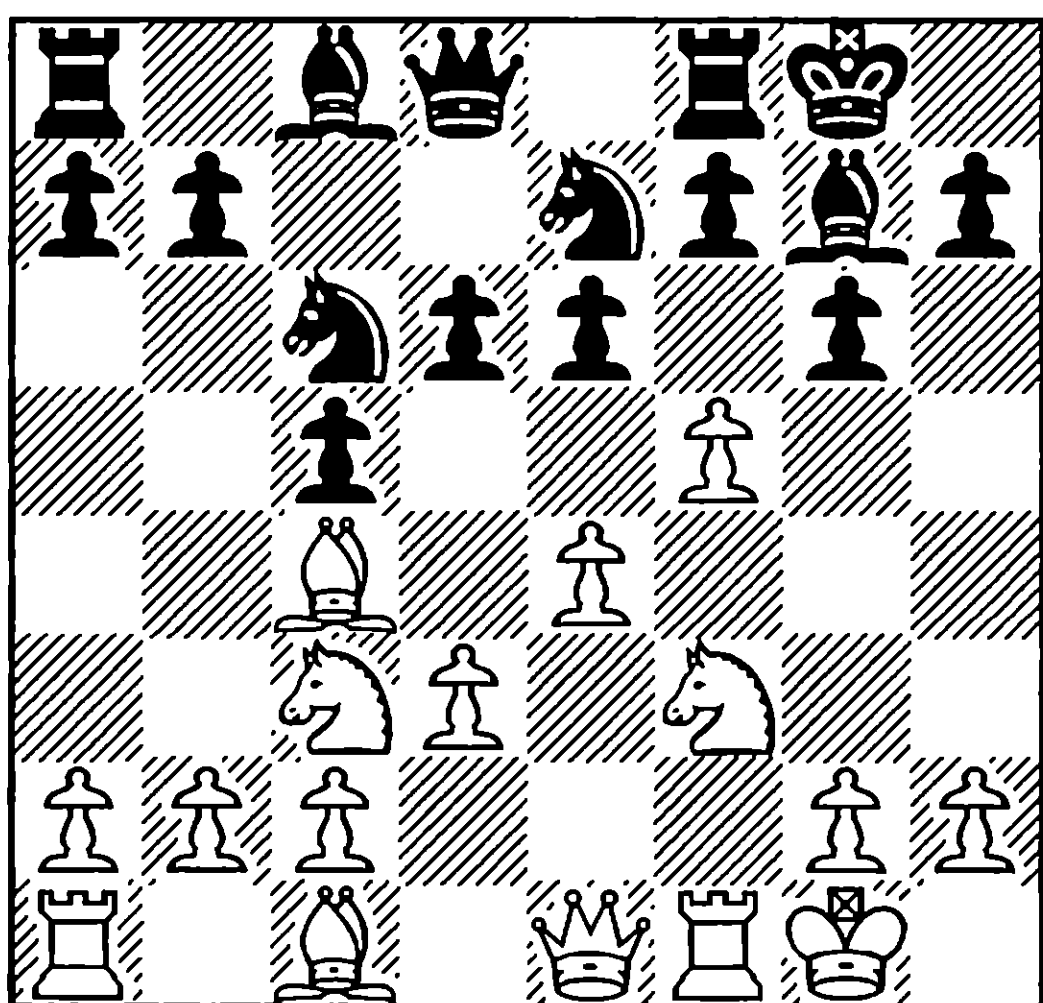
3...g6 4 ♘f3 ♙g7 5 ♙c4

White aims his bishop at the f7-pawn and prepares to castle kingside. In the Grand Prix White tends to follow a similar attacking plan each time, which makes it easier to work out how to play aggressively.

5...♘c6 6 0-0 e6 7 d3 ♘ge7 8 ♚e1

The queen is ready to transfer to the kingside via the g3 or the h4-squares. This is a key idea in the opening to make sure that the attack can be in place within the next few moves.

8...0-0 9 f5!?



This is an indication of the value of prior knowledge, since Jones is copying older games where the advance of the f-pawn caused Black a lot of practical problems. The point behind the pawn sacrifice is to allow the dark-squared bishop to be launched into the attack via the g5 or h6-squares. Of course, if you had to try and work out the consequences of such a sacrifice at the board it would prove impossible, but knowing

the middlegame plan of how to conduct the attack works wonders.

9...d5

Other moves:

a) 9...♘d4 10 ♘xd4 cxd4 11 f6 (a sneaky little pawn move that helpfully eliminates Black's dark-squared bishop which is usually an important defender) 11...dxc3 12 fxg7 ♙xg7 13 ♚h4 (a standard manoeuvre for White, moving the queen to an attacking position and preparing ♙h6+ to take advantage of the weak dark squares around the king) 13...♚b6+ 14 ♙h1 ♘g8 (14...cxb2 is tempting, but after 15 ♚f6+ ♙g8 16 ♙h6 bxa1 ♚ 17 ♚xa1 Black is lost) 15 bxc3 ♚a5 16 ♙f4 d5 17 ♙b3 dxe4 18 ♙d6 ♙d7 (Black gives up the exchange, which is hardly surprising considering that 18...♚d8 loses in dramatic style: 19 ♚xf7+! ♙xf7 20 ♚xh7+ ♙e8 21 ♙c7 and wins) 19 ♙xf8+ ♚xf8 20 ♚xe4 and White is the exchange up with a superior position so winning should be just a matter of time, A.Hnydiuk-L.Kowalczyk, Polish team Championship 1999.

b) 9...exf5 10 ♚h4 and now:

b1) 10...h5 (it is important to remember that, although there is no instant win, White's continuous pressure should be enough to secure a clear advantage) 11 ♙g5 ♚d7 12 ♚ae1 ♙h8 13 ♙f6 (White's pieces are well placed, so the next stage is to exchange the g7-bishop which tends to do a lot of defensive work) 13...fxe4 14 dxe4 ♘g8 15 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 16 ♚f4 (the queen now

has the dual role of increasing the pressure on the f-file, by threatening moves such as ♖g5, and targeting the weak d6-pawn) 16...a6 17 ♖d1 (White takes the opportunity to restore the material balance by winning back a pawn) 17...b5 18 ♖xd6 ♕g4 19 ♕e3 (there is no point exchanging queens when there are still plenty of opportunities to attack) 19...♘ge7 20 ♖d5 ♖b7 21 h3 ♕c8 22 ♕xc5 b4 23 ♘a4 ♕c7 24 ♖d4 ♖ac8 25 ♖xf7! (a nice way to finish the game in style) 25...♕a5 (25...♖xf7 runs into 26 ♘e6+) 26 ♘e6+ 1-0 P.Horn-A.Payen, Geneva 1990.

b2) 10...♘d4 11 ♖g5! (the theme of pinning the knight on e7 is a key to this variation) 11...♖e8 12 ♘d5 ♘dc6 13 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 14 ♖xf6 h5 15 ♕g5 ♔h7 16 ♖xf7 ♖g8 17 ♘h4 ♕c7 18 exf5 ♖xf5 19 ♖xf5! 1-0 M.Voracek-T.Micanek, Czech Team Championship 2000.

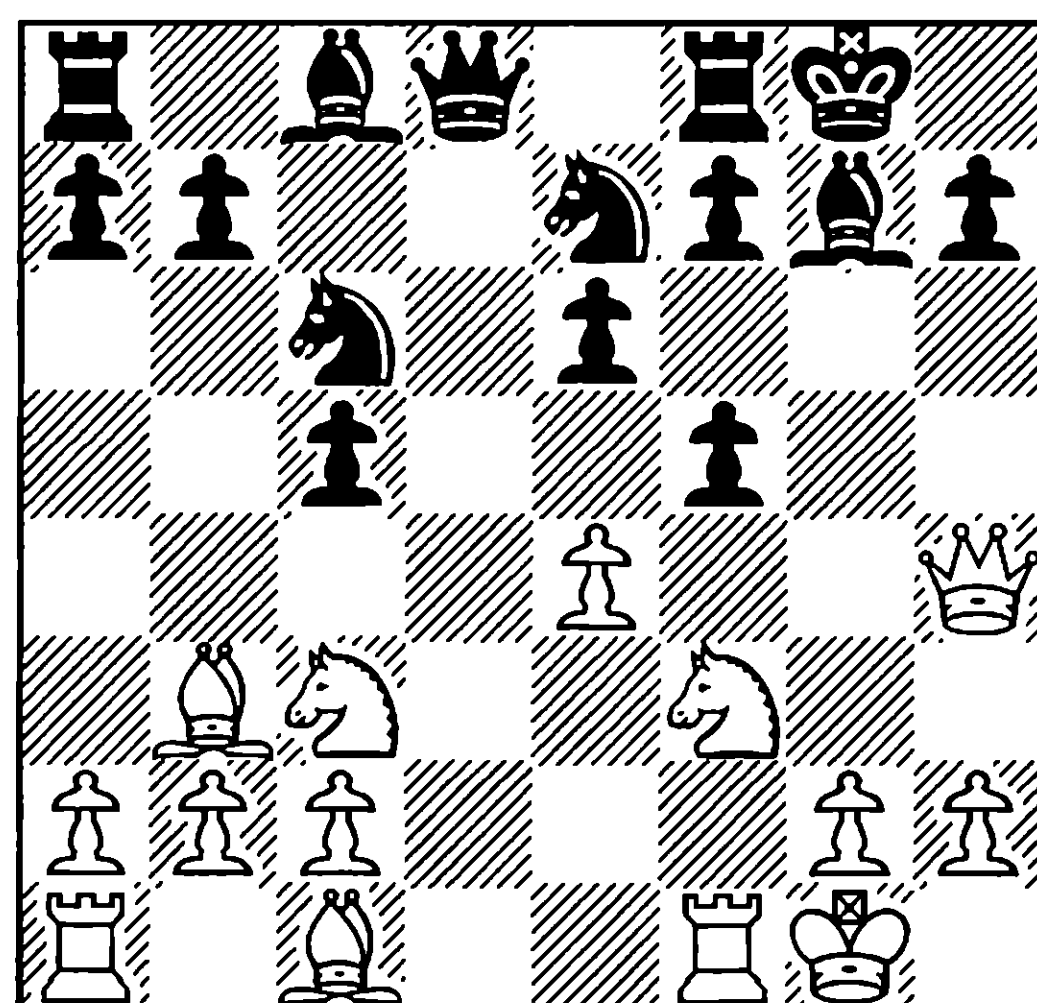
c) 10...♕d7 11 ♖h6 ♘e5 12 ♘g5 (this set-up for White is very strong and there is no reasonable defence for Black) 12...♘xc4 13 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♕xh7+ (the start of a king-hunt which is miserable for Black but will make White smile!) 14...♖f6 15 e5+ (with so many pieces on the board the hapless black king has no chance) 15...♔xg5 (alternatively, 15...dxe5 16 ♘ce4 mate, or 15...♔xe5 16 ♖ae1+ ♔f6 17 ♕h6 followed by ♘h7 mate) 16 h4+ ♔g4 17 ♕h6 1-0 O.Bitic-D.Sulc, Bizovac 2000.

10 ♖b3

White maintains tension by avoiding any pawn captures, leaving Black

the problem of having to decide what to do next.

10...dxe4 11 dxe4 gxf5 12 ♕h4



The benefit of having the queen on e1 becomes clear, as it is now well placed to step up the pressure on the kingside by supporting the bishop to g5 or h6 and even, in the right circumstances, ♘g5 to attack the vulnerable h7-pawn.

12...♘d4 13 ♖g5 ♘xf3+

The pin on the e7-knight looks rather ominous, so Black finds an elaborate way to wriggle out of the problem. Nevertheless, I think the passive 13...f6 should be preferred, when 14 ♖e3 offers roughly equal chances.

14 ♖xf3 ♕d4+ 15 ♔h1

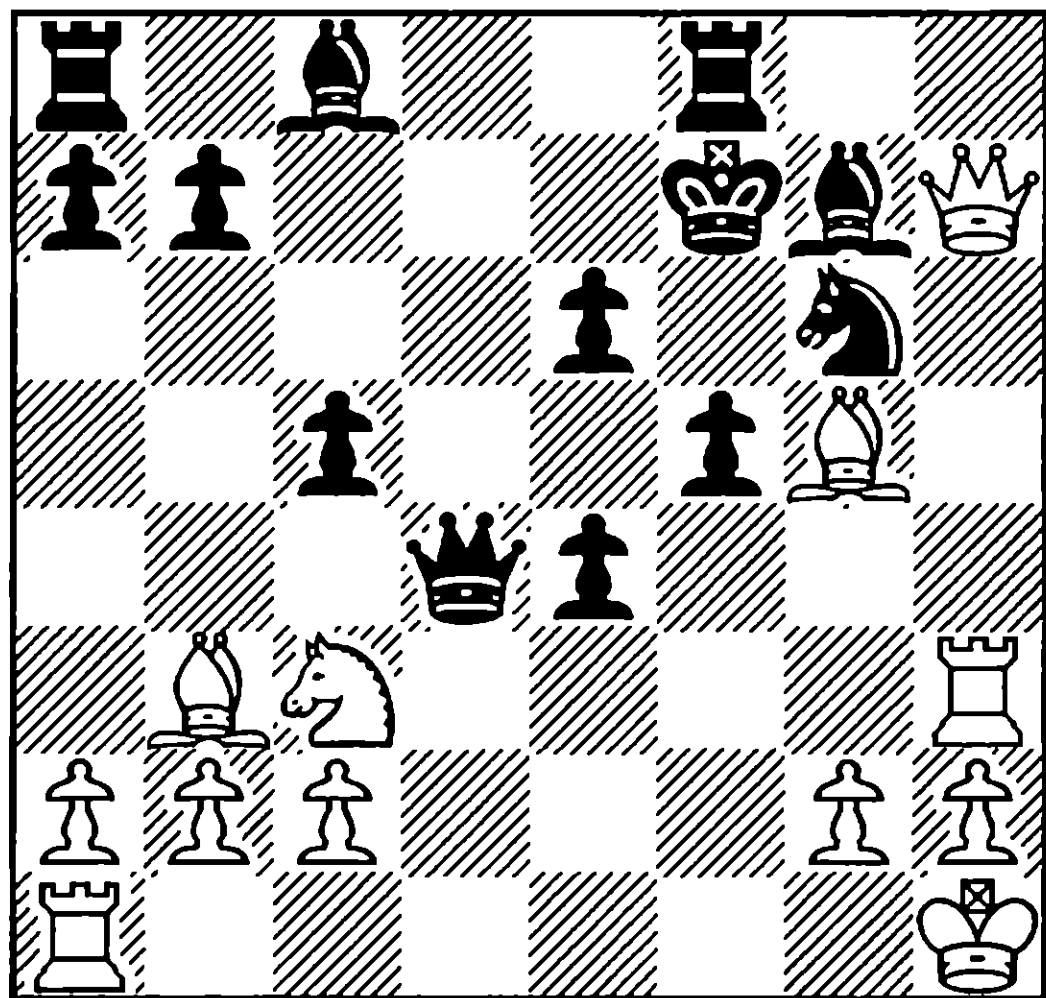
Black might be a pawn up, but White's queen, dark-squared bishop and king's rook are threateningly placed on the kingside, while the other bishop on b3 continues to exert influence against Black's pawn shield.

15...♘g6 16 ♕h5 fxe4 17 ♖h3! f5?

It seems to make sense to give one pawn back and then hide the king

away, but White has seen further. Instead, 17...h6 18 ♖xh6 ♖xh6 19 ♗xh6 ♗g7 20 ♔e3 b6 21 ♘xe4 would leave White with the superior chances, but at least Black is still in the game.

18 ♗xh7+ ♔f7



19 ♖h6!

I suspect this is the move that Black missed. The rook benefits from the weakness of the pinned bishop to create mayhem in the defence.

19...♘e7 20 ♖f6+ ♗xf6 21 ♖xf6 ♔xf6 22 ♖f1!

White is now up on material and keeps faith with his attacking instincts by adding the rook to the attack.

22...♖h8 23 ♘xe4+ ♔f7 24 ♖xf5+

A brilliant finish to a fine game.

24...♘xf5 25 ♗xf5+ 1-0

Play like a Champion, but be patient

I would like to emphasize the advantage of knowing such games if you wish to play the opening because it will help you formulate the attack in the middlegame. It is far better for others

to do all the hard work of finding out the right way to handle the opening, when you can copy the best ideas. This can be done by going through games from a book and noting how White wins. The alternative is to use your computer database, collect a number of victories by strong players, and then play rapidly through the games to get a feel of the opening.

A demonstration of the benefit of having a little knowledge is that playing through the Grand Prix Attack game will now allow you to understand how the legendary American star Bobby Fischer outwitted an opponent in the opening:

Game 20

A.Saidy-R.J.Fischer

US Team Championship,

New York 1969

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 f5

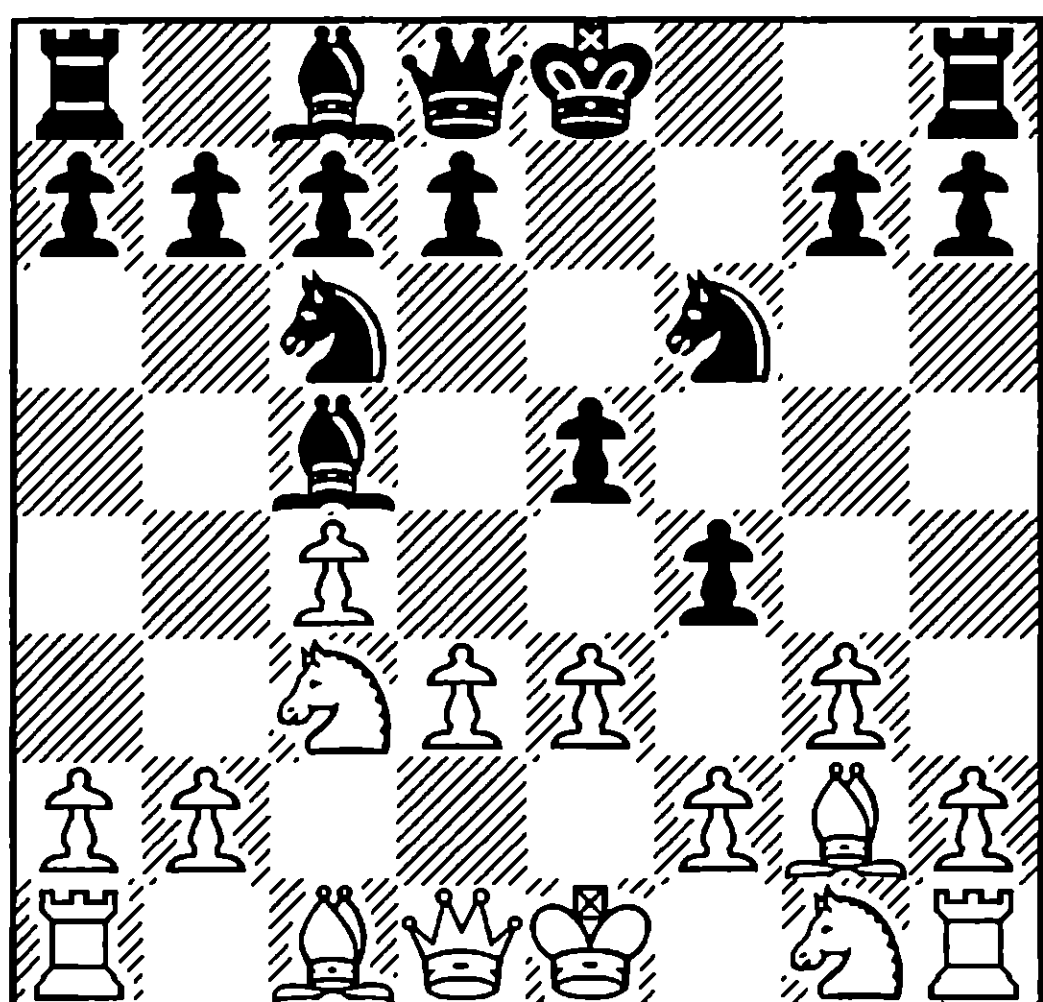
This is what we nowadays call the reversed Grand Prix Attack – as can be easily understood when we notice that Black is playing in the same fashion as White in the previous game (1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 f4).

4 ♖g2 ♘f6 5 e3

The opening is still going strong on the evidence on the following game where Black is a top grandmaster: 5 d3 ♖c5 6 a3 (this is not normal, but the whole point is that White is out of his

depth and does not know what to do)
 6...d6 7 b4 ♖b6 8 e3 0-0 9 ♗g2 ♕e8 (as
 in the Grand Prix Attack the queen pre-
 pares to attack on the kingside) 10 ♘d5
 ♗xd5 11 ♕xd5+ ♖h8 12 0-0 f4!? (this
 sacrifice should be familiar from Jones-
 Zarkaj; if the e3-pawn takes then the
 bishop on b6 is strengthened, while if
 the g3-pawn takes the white king is
 exposed) 13 ♘c3 ♕h3 14 exf4? (14 ♖e1
 is necessary) 14...♕d4 15 ♕d2 ♕xf1 16
 ♗xf1 exf4 17 gxf4 ♗h5 18 b5 ♘e5! 19
 fxex5 ♖xf2 20 ♗xf2 ♕xf2+ 21 ♔xf2
 ♗xh2+ 22 ♖e3 ♖f8 23 ♖a2 ♗f2+ 24
 ♕e4 dxe5 0-1 M.Renaudin-L.Fressinet,
 Paris 2001.

5...♕c5 6 d3 f4!?



This pawn sacrifice might look mar-
 vellous, and admirers can point to
 Fischer's genius, but for us knowing
 about the previous main game makes
 it look quite logical. Yes, indeed, Black is
 playing a Grand Prix Attack with col-
 ours reversed. If your opponent is not
 an expert on the Sicilian it could still
 come as a nasty surprise.

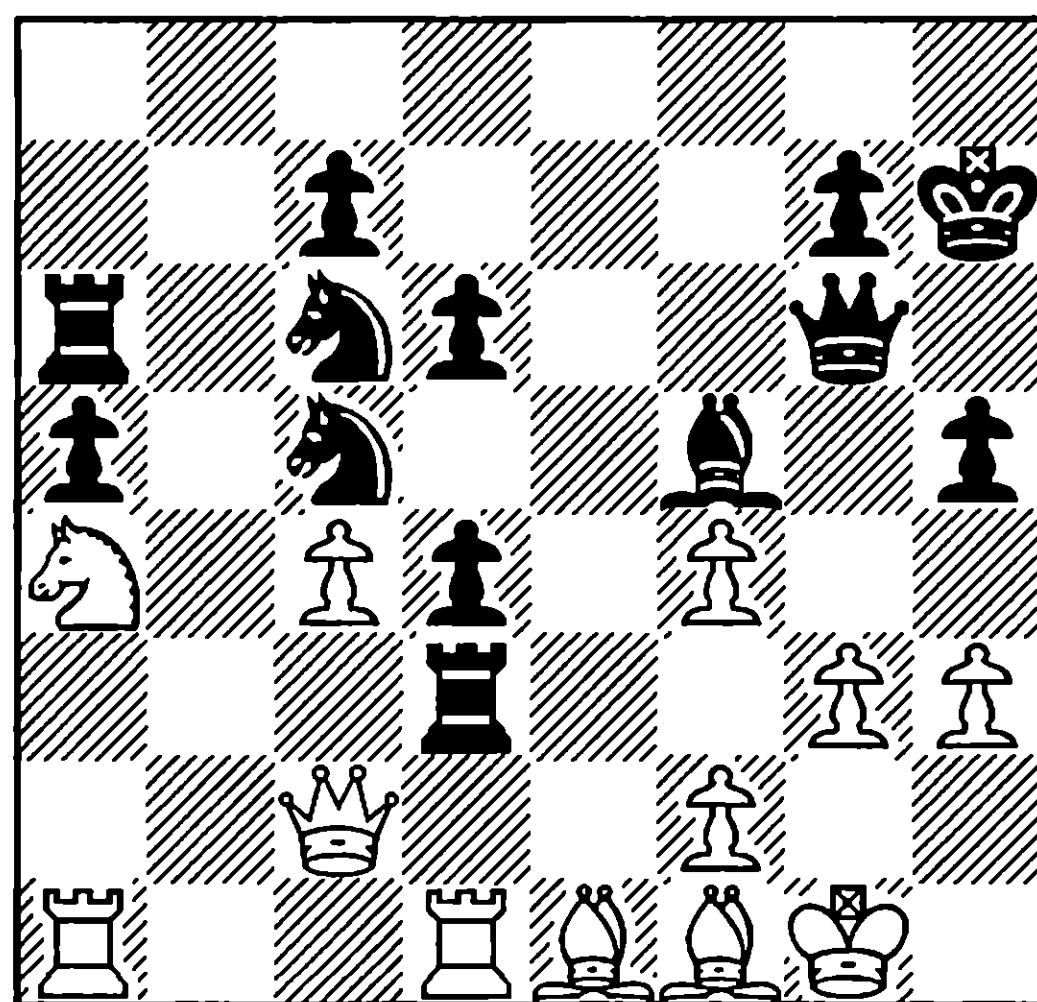
7 exf4 0-0 8 ♘ge2 ♗e8

8...d6 at once is the modern way to
 handle the opening, because more les-
 sons have been learned from the Grand
 Prix Attack. There is an understanding
 that if White takes on e5 then a pawn
 should be ready to recapture.

9 0-0 d6 10 ♘a4 ♕d4 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12
 h3 h5 13 a3 a5 14 b3 ♗g6 15 ♘b2 ♕f5
 16 ♗c2 ♘d7 17 ♖e1 ♘c5 18 ♕f1 ♖a6!

An inspired idea to target b3.

19 ♕d2 ♖b6 20 ♕xa5 ♖xb3 21 ♕d2 ♖a8
 22 a4 ♖a6 23 a5 ♔h7 24 ♖ed1 b6 25
 ♕e1 bxa5 26 ♘a4 ♖xd3!



Black gives up the exchange in or-
 der to take control of the light squares
 and go chasing weak pawns.

27 ♕xd3 ♕xd3 28 ♗a2 ♘b4 29 ♗a3?

In these difficult circumstances 29
 ♗b2 is the best chance for survival,
 though after 29...♘xa4 30 ♖xa4 ♕c2 31
 ♖xa5! ♕xd1 Black regains the ex-
 change with the better chances.

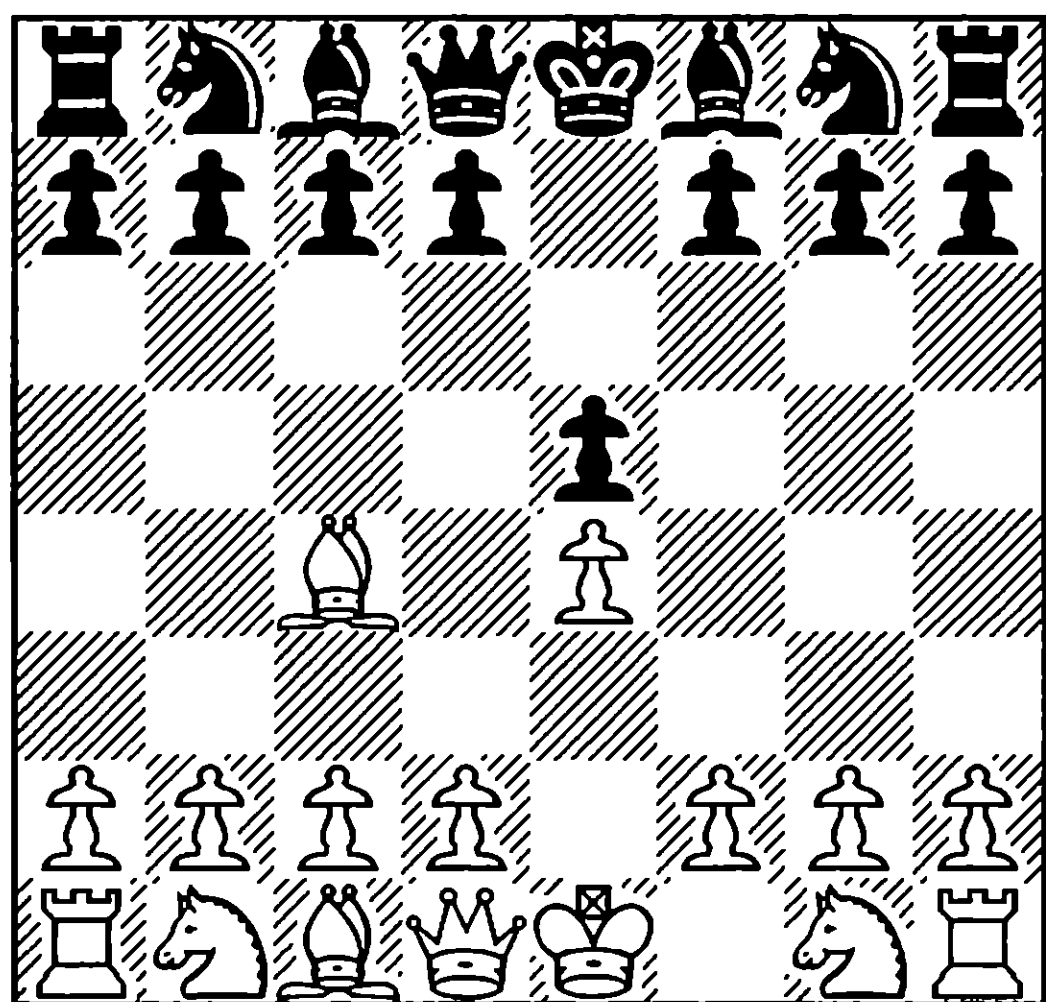
29...♘c2 30 ♗b2 ♘xa1 31 ♖xa1 ♘xa4
 32 ♖xa4 ♗e4 33 ♕xa5 ♖xa5 34 ♖xa5
 ♗e1+ 35 ♔h2 ♗xa5 36 ♗xd4 0-1

"Chess is life." – Bobby Fischer.

There are plenty of times when the opening promises some potential for an attack in the middlegame but a patient approach is required. In the next game I try, first of all, to prevent Black from having any active play and only then look to make progress on the kingside:

Game 21
G.Lane-A.Phillips
 Paignton 1996
Bishop's Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4



I have dabbled with the Bishop's Opening for years and still do occasionally. It is in fashion again since it is a good way to avoid the Petroff (2 ♘f3 ♘f6) which has the reputation for being both dull and solid. My idea is to reach positions that normally occur after 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♖c4, followed d2-d3, which is a Closed Giuoco Piano.

2...♘f6 3 d3 c6!?

Here 3...♘c6 would allow me to

transpose to the Giuoco Piano with 4 ♘f3. The text is an independent line known as the Paulsen Defence – after the German master Louis Paulsen (1833-91), who was one of the world's best players in the 1860s and contributed much to the development of chess openings. Paulsen proposed a number of defensive ideas for Black, and indeed whole new systems, including the ...e6 Sicilian which still bears his name to this day.

4 ♘f3 ♖e7

4...d5 is answered by 5 ♖b3!, and if 5...dxe4 then 6 ♘g5 with a slight edge.

5 ♖b3

The bishop retreat is part of the opening plan in this line so that ...d7-d5 lacks bite because it won't be attacking the bishop on c4. Naturally 5 ♘xe5? ♔a5+ winning a piece has to be avoided.

5...0-0 6 0-0 d6 7 ♔e1 ♘a6 8 c3

A slow, gradual way to create a pawn centre with an eventual d3-d4, and it also creates an escape square for the bishop to avoid an exchange of pieces.

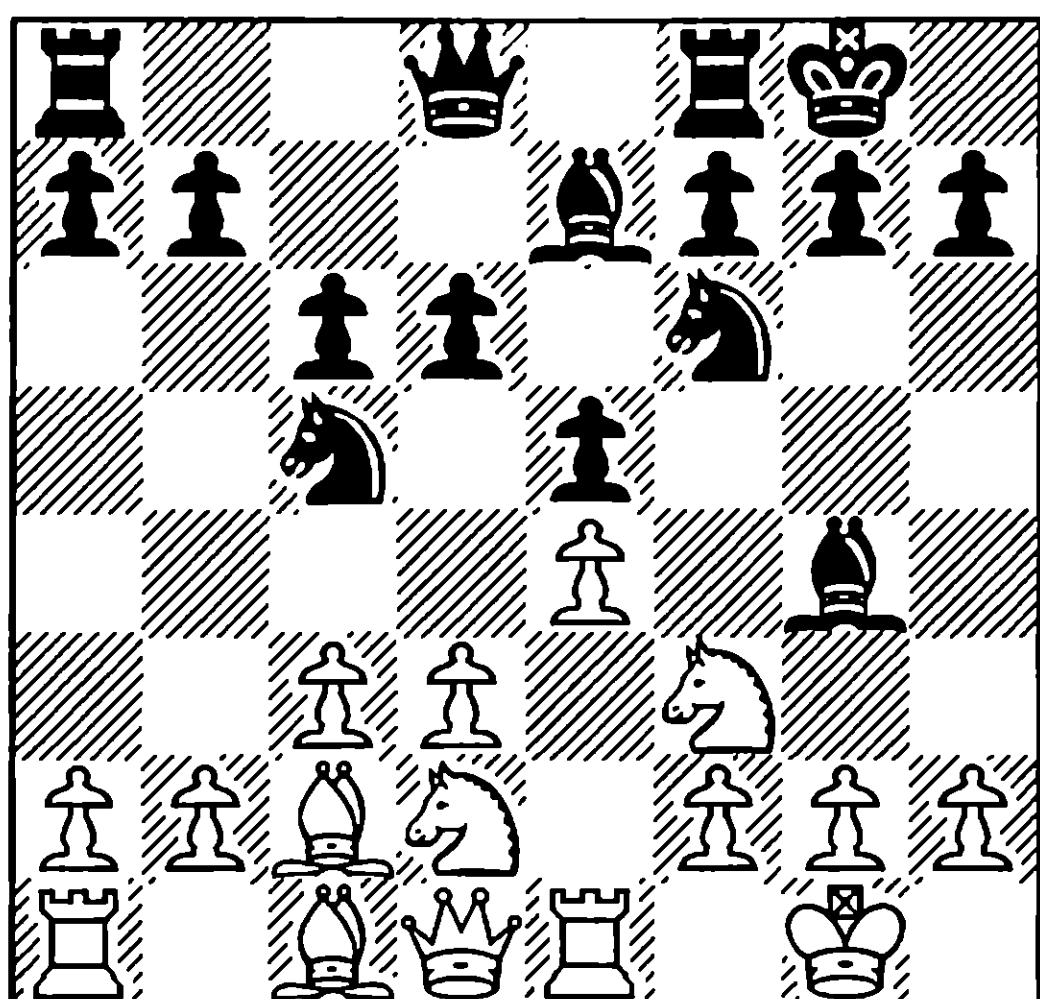
8...♘c5 9 ♖c2 ♖g4

In the game R.Picard-R.Gervasio, French Team Championship 2005, Black tried 9...♘fd7, when play continued 10 ♘bd2 (maybe 10 d4 ♘e6 11 ♘a3 should be tested) 10...♔e8 11 ♘f1 ♖f8 12 ♘g3 g6 13 ♖e3 ♘e6 14 ♔d2 with a slight edge for White.

10 ♘bd2

The middlegame plan is easy to work

out because, having played this sort of position before and seen other games, there are typical themes.



The first one is that the queen's knight goes to the kingside via f1 and then emerges on e3 or g3. There will then be a fight to establish a white knight on f5 to help start an attack, which can be aided by a queen emerging on f3, and also pressure exerted in the centre with d3-d4. Perhaps the key is to stamp out any hint of counterplay by Black, so that White can slowly but surely build up his pieces on the kingside in preparation for an onslaught. It is for this reason that White tends to make sure that ...d6-d5 can only be played in circumstances that lead to the e5-pawn becoming vulnerable.

10...Nxe6 11 h3 Bb5

After 11...Bxf3 I was planning to play 12 Qxf3, leaving the knight to continue its intended journey to f1 and then on to f5 via e3 or g3.

12 Nf1 Ne8 13 Ng3 Bg6

Black should think about exchanging some pieces, so as to avoid having a

cramped position. For instance, 13...Bxf3 14 Qxf3 Bg5 15 Qxg5 Nxg5, although after 16 We3 Ne6 17 Rad1 intending d3-d4 White has a small but lasting advantage.

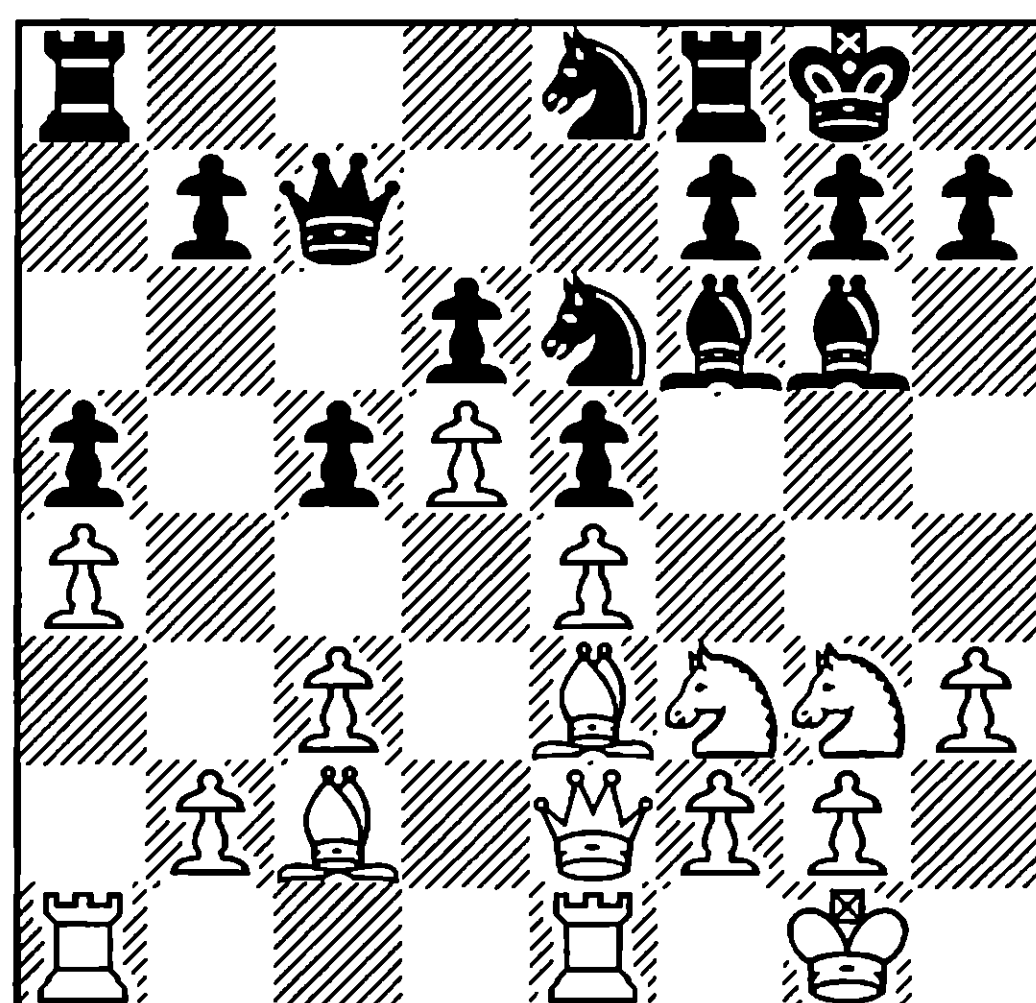
14 d4 Bf6 15 Be3

I am happy to catch up on development. The eventual aim is to make progress on the kingside, but now is the time to improve the position of the queenside pieces.

15...Qc7 16 a4 a5 17 Qe2

The queen moves to the second rank in order to co-ordinate the rooks, while also keeping an eye on preventing the possibility of ...b7-b5.

17...c5 18 d5!



I am happy to close the centre because that will allow me to concentrate on making things happen on the kingside.

18...Nf4?!

But the retreat with 18...Nd8 would be an admission that something has seriously gone wrong, as the knights on the back rank are badly placed.

19 Qd2 Nh5

The former British Champion (of 1954) avoids losing a pawn, but now the initiative allows me to step up the pressure on the kingside in an effort to make the most of Black's discordant pieces.

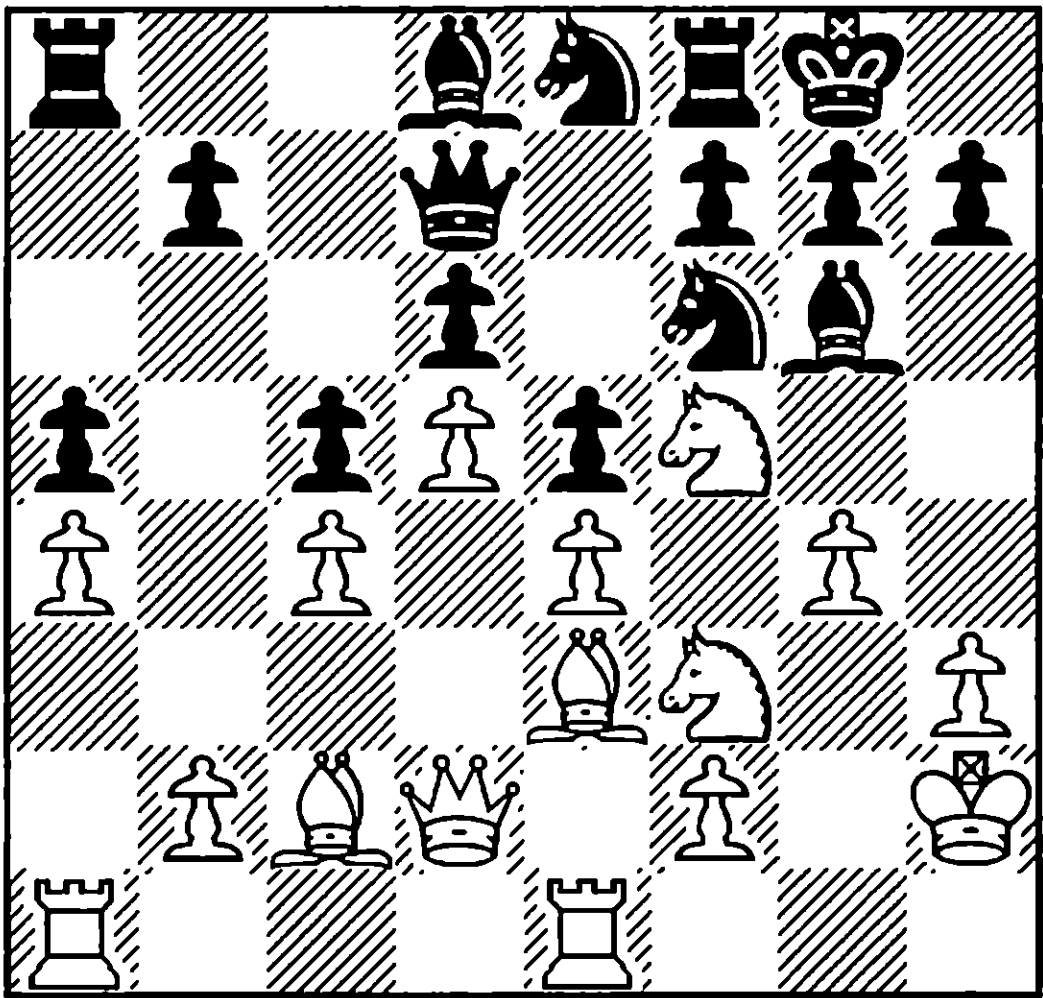
20 ♖f5 ♙d8

There is little choice but to accept a dour defensive task, since the alternative 20...♙xf5 21 exf5 g6 (White was on the verge of trapping the h5-knight) 22 g4 ♘hg7 23 ♙h6 leaves White a bind on the position, and the big threat is g4-g5 followed by f5-f6.

21 g4 ♘hf6 **22** ♔h2

There is no rush. Black has no hint of counterplay so I can take my time to reinforce the potential attack on the kingside. The advance of pawns in front of the white king is not risky in this case because, with the centre already closed, Black cannot open up the position and make some threats.

22... ♚d7 **23** c4



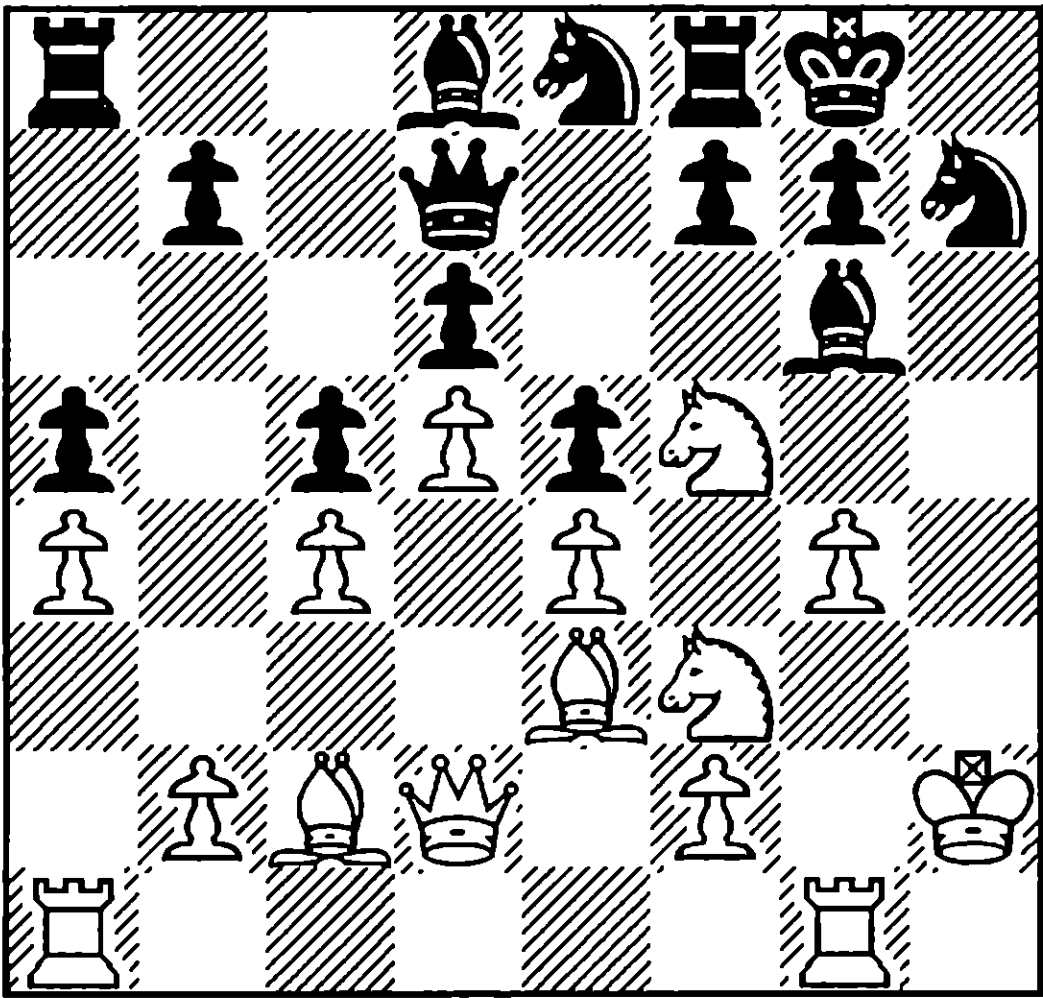
The prospect of Black safely playing ...b7-b5 is firmly shut down, further reducing his role to that of a spectator

as White's attack gathers pace.

23...h5!?

Phillips is in no mood to sit and wait, so tries to mix things up.

24 ♖g1 hxg4 **25** hxg4 ♘h7



26 ♖g3

By this stage I was really enjoying the game. At my leisure I was making sure both rooks could help pursue the black king, while I really could not see what Black could do – and that also seemed to occur to my opponent who took longer and longer to find his moves.

26... ♘ef6 **27** ♖h1 ♖e8 **28** ♙h6!

A crafty way to force home the advantage because acceptance of the sacrifice would be fatal (see the next note). Then again, it should come as no surprise that such options exist when you count the pieces. I have two rooks, two knights, a queen and the dark-squared bishop on hand to boost the attack, whereas Black's defensive pieces are poorly placed and lack mobility.

28... ♘xe4

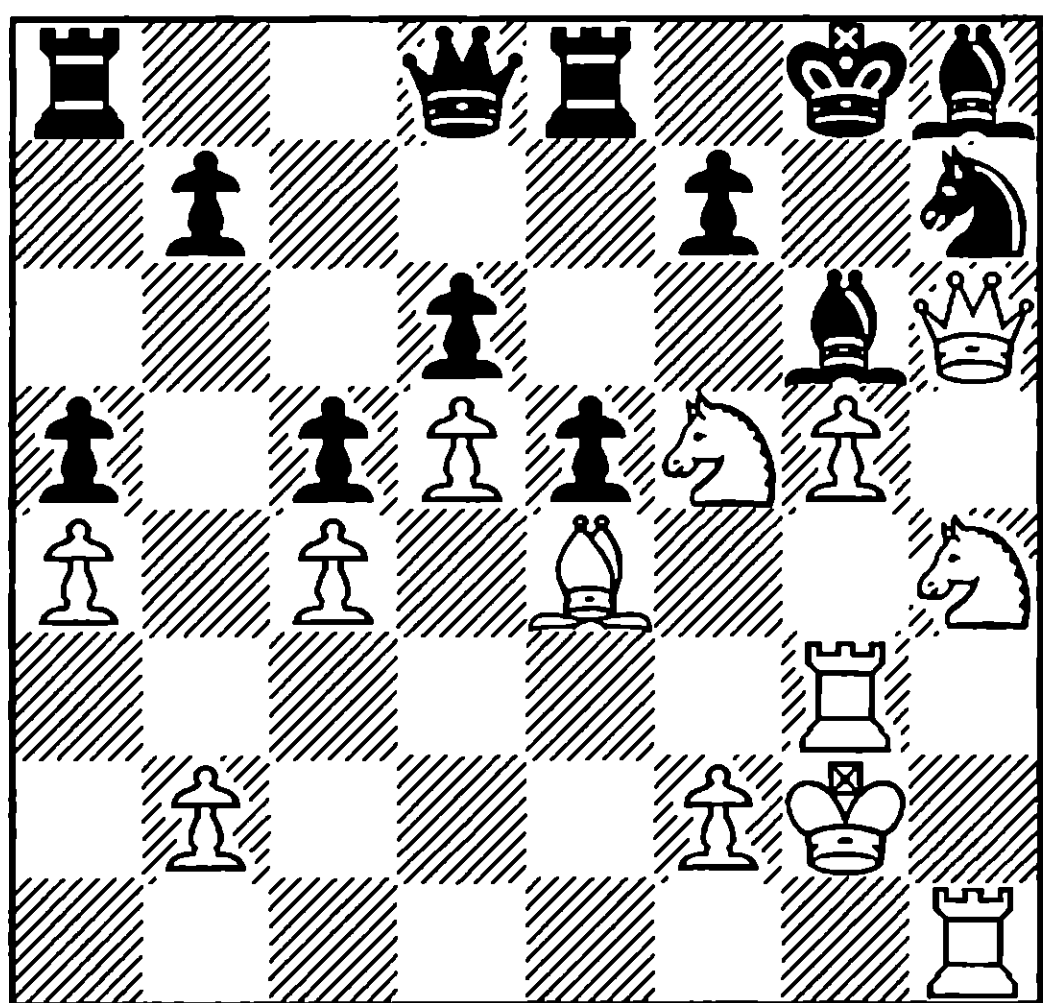
This is desperation but I can't really

offer Black much advice. For instance, after 28...gxf6 29 ♖xh6 ♜xg4 (or 29...♙xf5? 30 gxf5 ♜h8 31 ♖g7 mate) 30 ♜xg4 ♙f6 31 ♜g2 ♜f8 (otherwise White can play the stunning ♖xh7+ thanks to the pin on the g6-bishop) 32 ♜g5 ♜ad8 33 ♜h7! is a killer move and Black should just give up.

29 ♙xe4 gxf6 30 ♖xh6 ♙f6 31 ♖g2

The king steps out of the way to unleash the rook on the h-file, which was all part of the plan when I played 26 ♜g3.

31...♙d8 32 g5! ♙h8 33 ♜3h4 1-0



The threat is to exchange pieces on g6 and then take on h7 or h8 depending how Black responds, after which checkmate is inevitable.

I was motivated to play in this patient style of restricting Black before going on the offensive by seeing a game by Garry Kasparov. Naturally, I could not hope to emulate the great man completely, but we can all be inspired by the star players even if it only helps us think of an appropriate plan.

Here is the game I was thinking of, which sees Black forced to endure a passive position until White takes a chance to make a strong breakthrough, having studiously manoeuvred his pieces behind his pawns:

Game 22

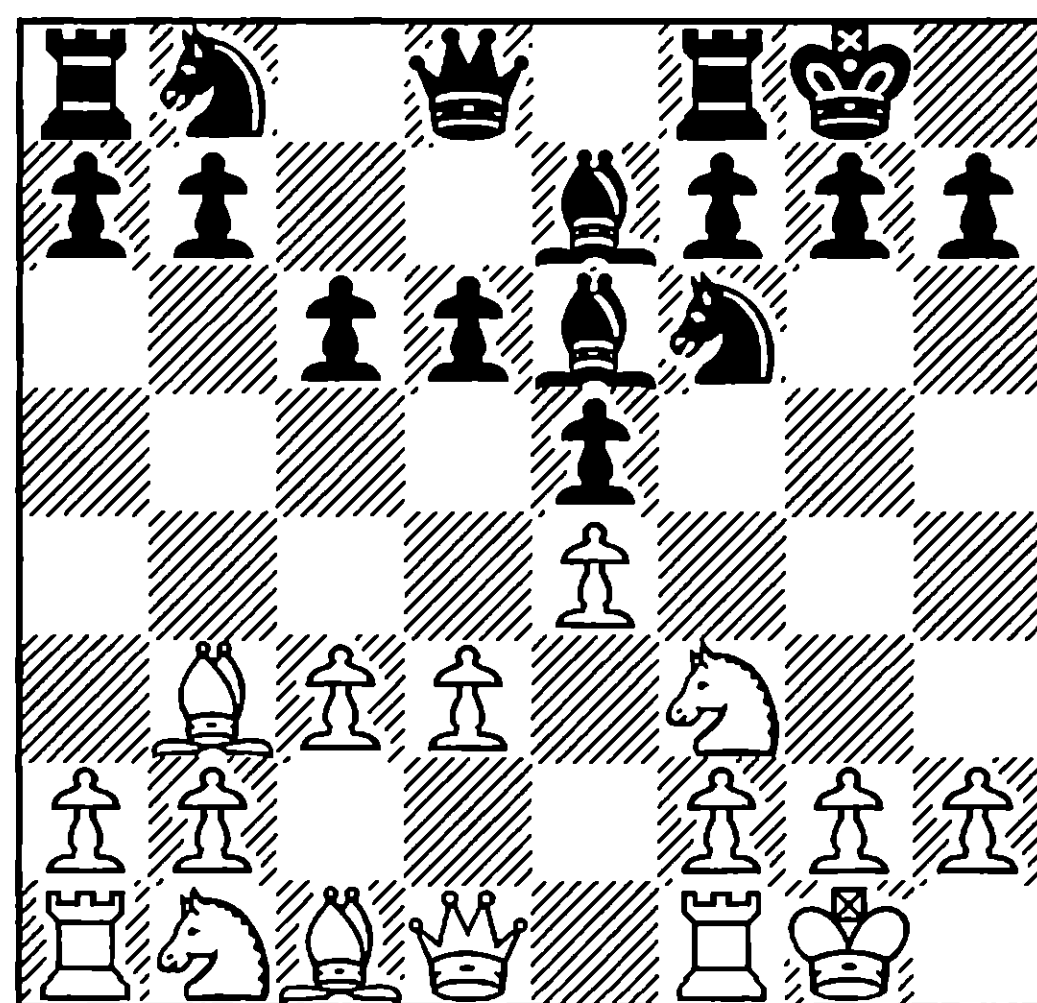
G.Kasparov-T.Georgadze

USSR Championship,

Minsk 1979

Philidor's Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙c4 ♙e7 4 d3 ♘f6 5 c3 0-0 6 0-0 c6 7 ♙b3 ♙e6!?



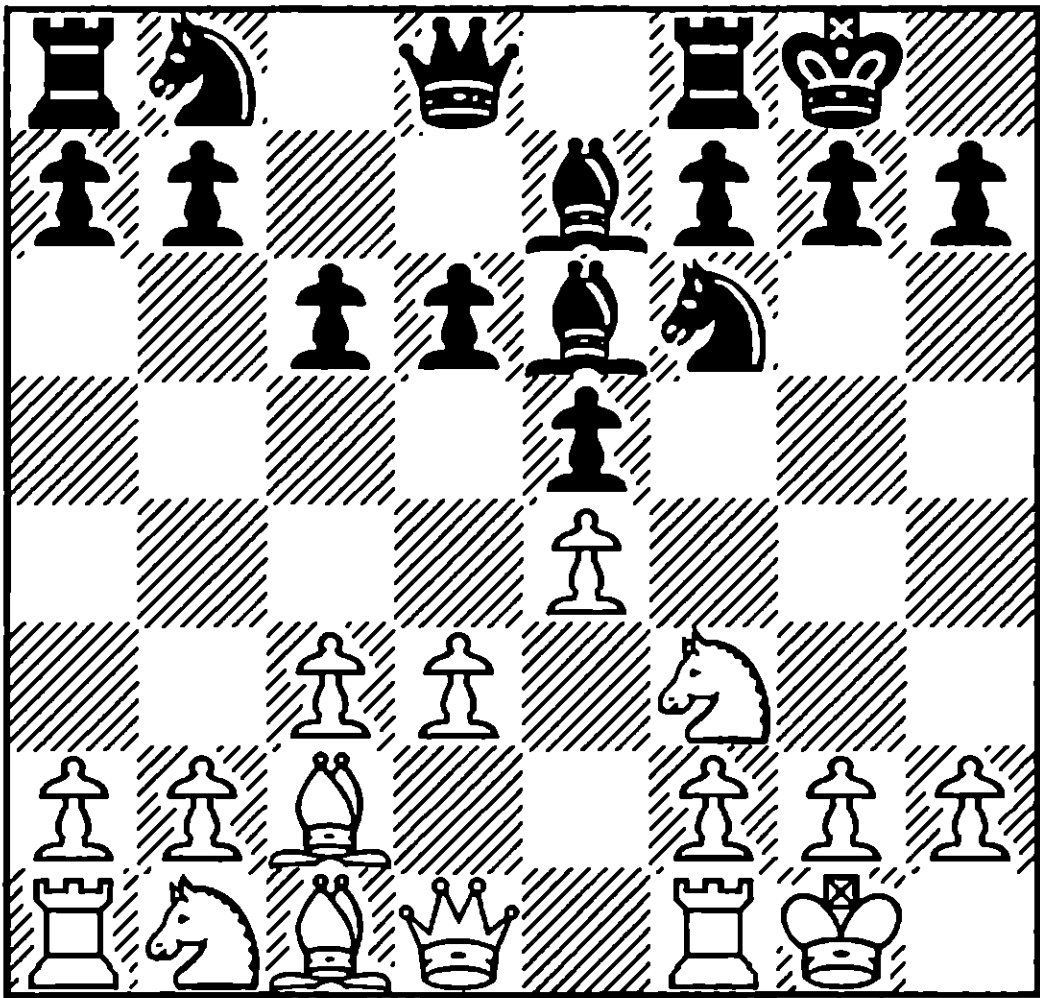
Black hopes to eliminate pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal by offering to trade bishops. I have seen some inexperienced players in similar positions happy to take on e6 so as to inflict doubled e-pawns on Black. In fact, that would be an error because Black would then have more control over the centre, as well as the semi-open f-file for the benefit of his rook – a sample attacking plan would be ...♘h5-f4 and ...♙e8-g6.

The pin on the queen's knight with 7...♙g4 is also popular; for example, 8 ♘bd2 h6!? (in an effort to avoid a passive game Black finds an intriguing idea to exchange pieces) 9 ♖e1 ♘h7 10 h3 ♙xf3 (or if 10...♙h5, as in F.Vallejo Pons-I.Sokolov, Mondariz 2001, then 11 ♘f1 ♘g5 12 ♙xg5 ♙xg5 13 ♘g3 with an edge) 11 ♘xf3 ♘g5, but now the nice mirroring move 12 ♘h2!? allows White to avoid the exchange and also prepares f2-f4.

Another possibility is 7...a5 8 ♖e1 (adopting the standard plan as seen in Lane-Phillips, to transfer the queen's knight to the kingside) 8...♘bd7 9 ♙c2 b5 10 ♘bd2 a4 11 ♘f1 again with a slight edge for White, M.Yilmaz-L.Gofshtein, Ankara 2010.

8 ♙c2

White is treating the position like a Ruy Lopez so he wants to keep the influential light-squared bishop.

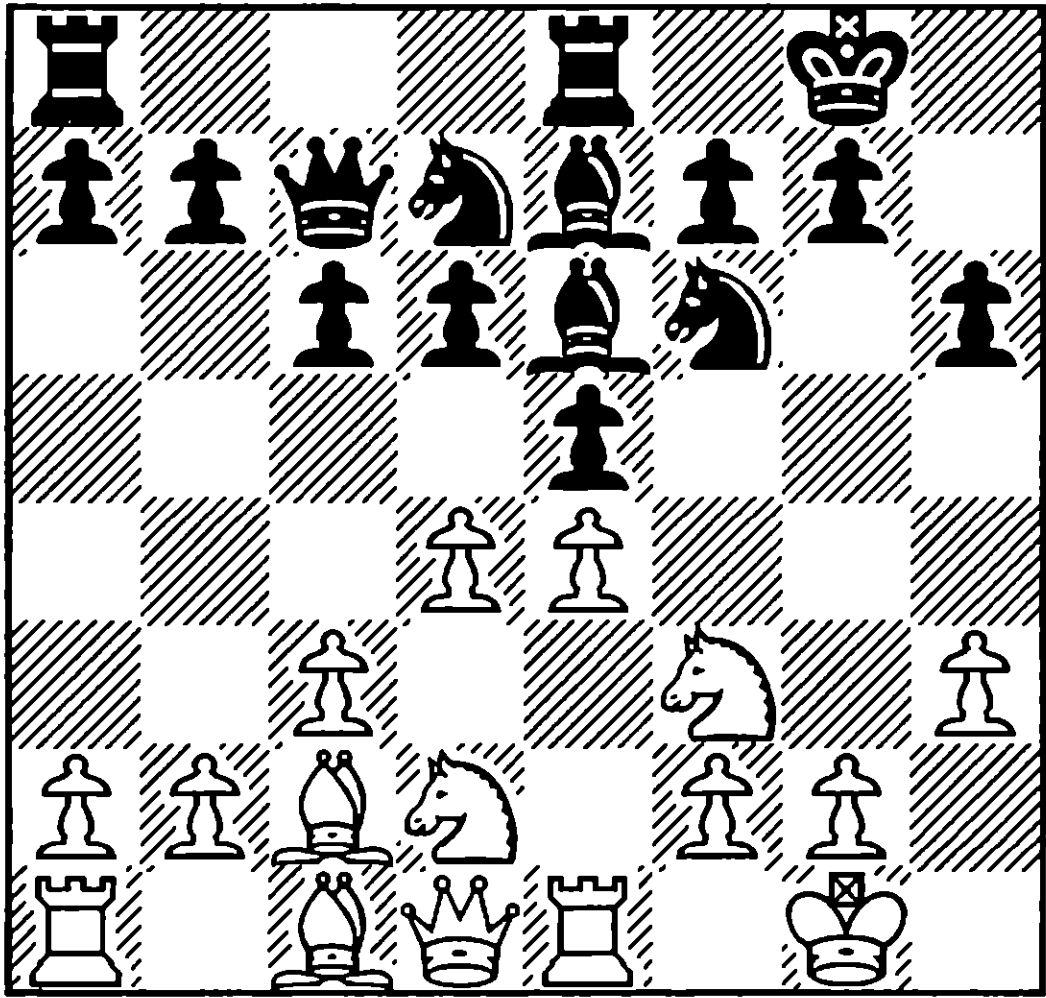


8...h6

Georgadze makes sure that the bishop cannot be bothered by a later ♘f3-g5. At the moment 8...♘bd7 9 ♘g5

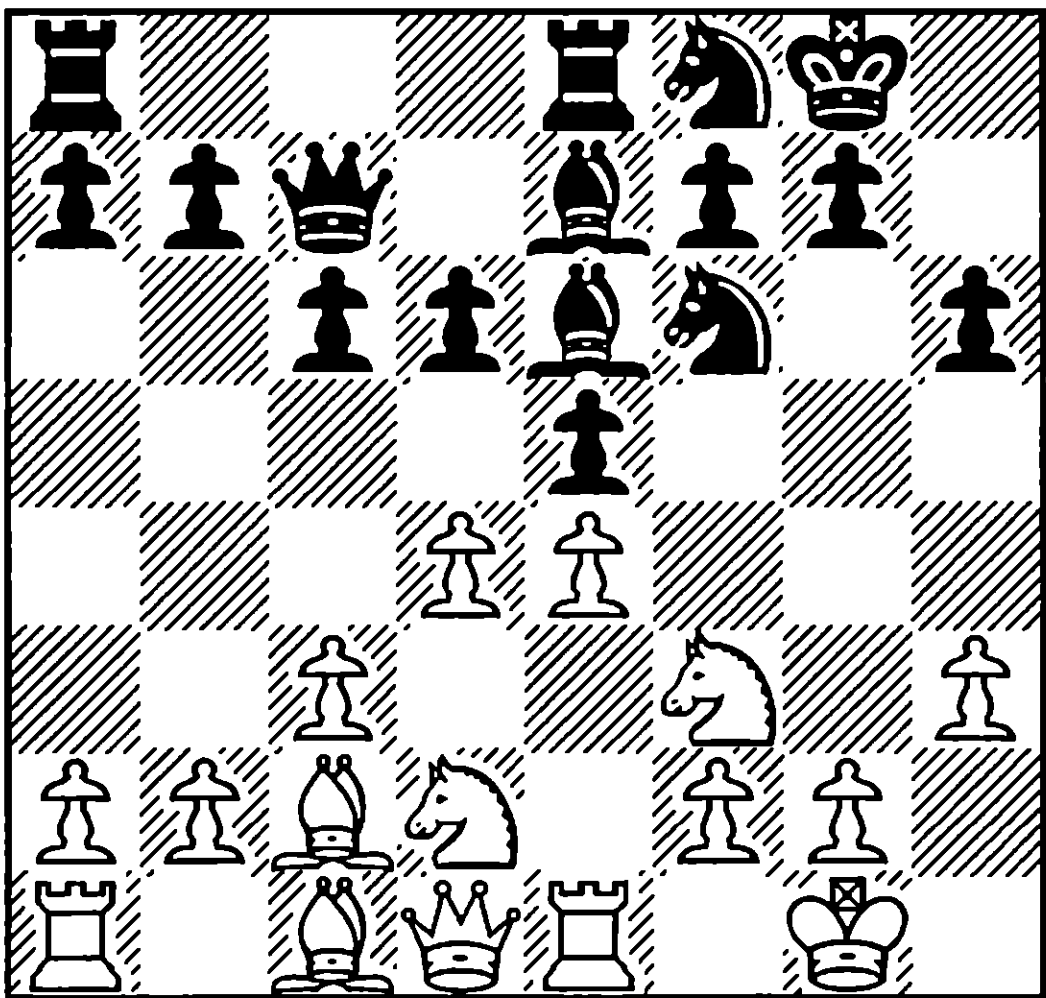
♙g4! is fine for Black, but after 9 ♖e1 ♗c7 10 d4 ♖e8 11 h3 it is likely that 11...h6 is the best choice.

9 ♖e1 ♘bd7 10 ♘bd2 ♗c7 11 d4 ♖fe8 12 h3!



Kasparov felt this was a star move because it emphasized how he restricts Black's chances on the kingside.

12...♘f8



13 c4

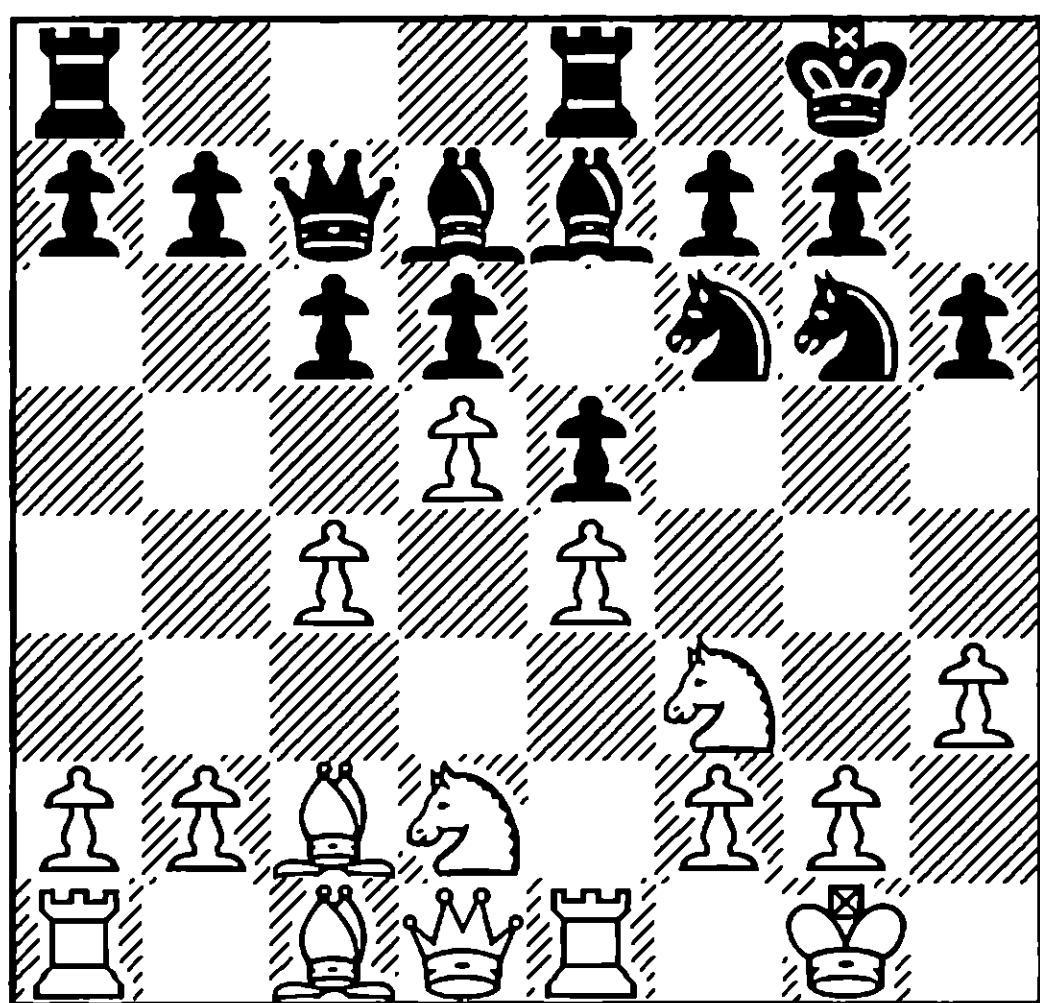
In his book *The Test of Time* Kasparov's comments chimed with my good intentions in the previous game. He wrote: "After first restricting Black's possibilities on the kingside, White unexpectedly changes the pattern of the

strategic battle. Instead of play on the kingside, he begins operations aimed at seizing space in the centre.”

13...♖g6 14 d5

This is the sort of pawn formation I was thinking of after playing 23 c4 in the previous game. Not exactly the same, but proof that you can borrow ideas to help your own attacking style.

14...♙d7



15 ♞b1!

Finding such a great move is the mark of a champion. Indeed, Kasparov wrote: “less was promised by the transfer of the knight via f1, since this would have weakened White’s fighting potential on the queenside.” Well, it makes sense when you hear it from the former world champion, and now the plan is ♞c3, ♙d2 and b2-b4.

15...♙f8 16 ♞c3 c5?!

Black is happy to block the position and go for a draw.

17 ♙a4

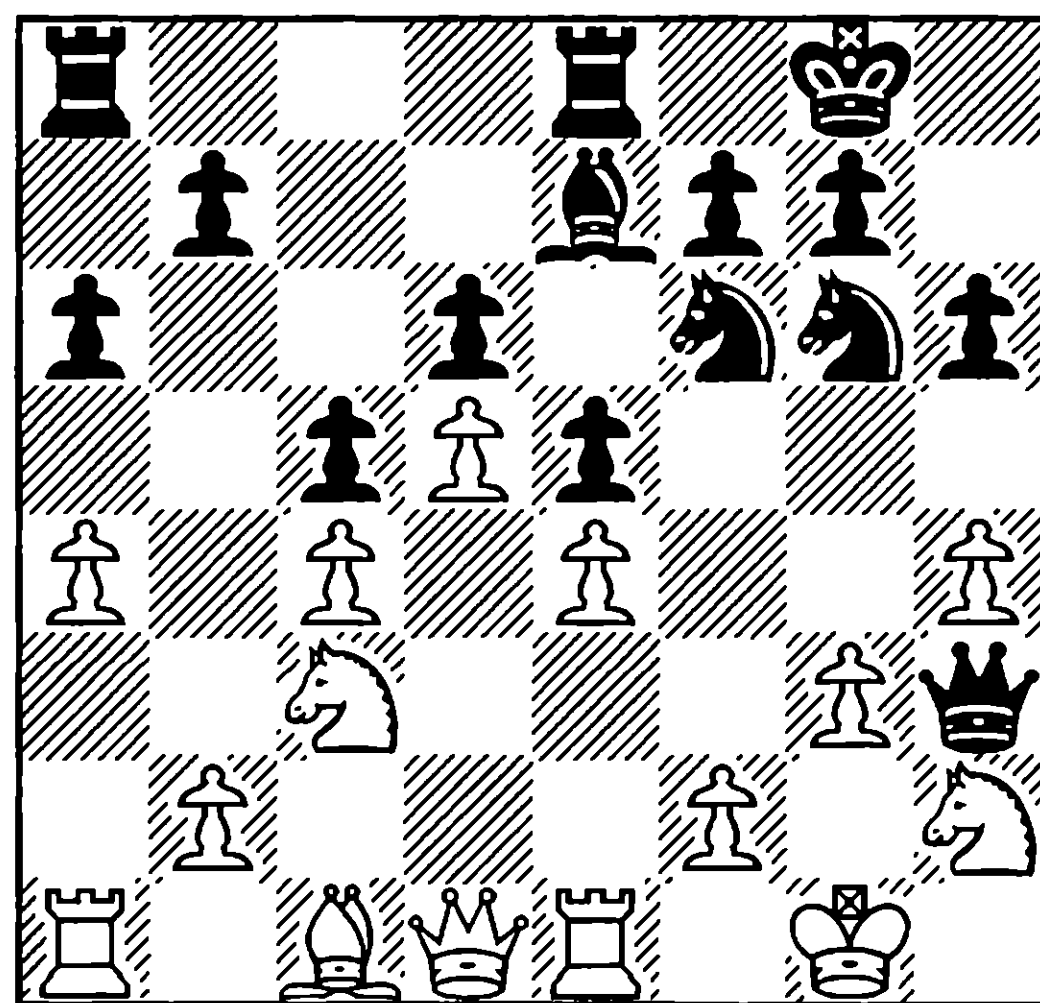
A far-sighted idea; White wishes to exchange light-squared bishops since his own has served its purpose. After

that Black’s remaining dark squared bishop is somewhat restricted, while White’s is comparatively active.

17...a6 18 ♙xd7 ♞xd7

After 18...♙xd7 Kasparov suggests 19 a3 b5 20 ♙e3, when the opening of the position will favour White who has the much more active pieces.

19 g3 ♙e7 20 h4 ♞f6 21 ♞h2 ♙d7 22 a4 ♙h3



This move was followed by a draw offer, but Kasparov always plays to win – especially when his opponent is already heading for time-trouble.

23 ♙f3 ♙d7

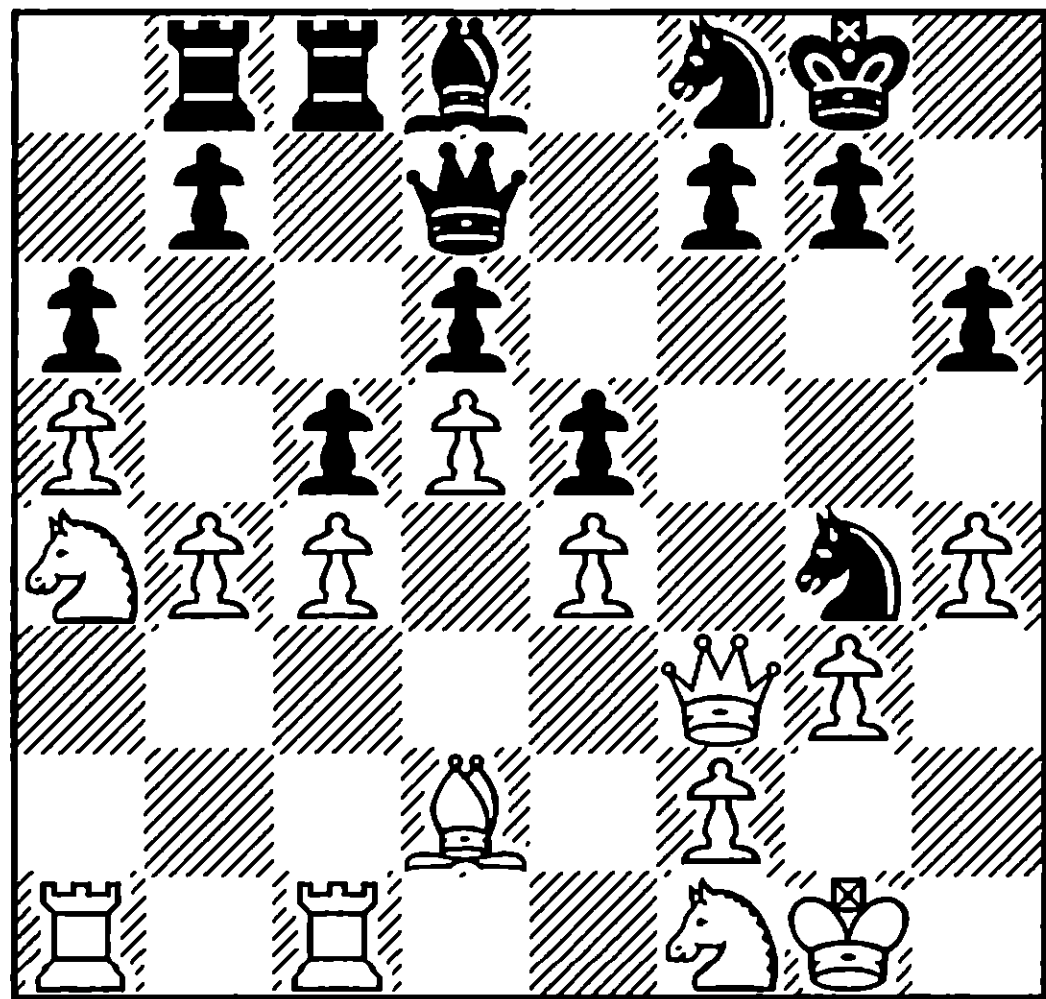
Black should really look to improve his pieces with 23...♙d8, although after 24 a5 b5 25 axb6 ♙xb6 White is still slightly better.

24 a5 ♞f8 25 ♙d2 ♞ec8 26 ♞f1 ♞g4?!

Kasparov thought this was weak – it may look aggressive but Black does not have enough pieces on the kingside to create an attack. Furthermore, the queen is now obliged to protect the knight on g4, so Black can’t manoeuvre his other knight via d7 to add weight to

the defence on the queenside. This is a key reason for Kasparov seeking to quickly open up some attacking lines.

27 ♖a4 ♕d8 28 ♖ec1 ♖ab8 29 b4!



White has been building up to this moment. Cracking open the queenside will be to his benefit because, with more room to manoeuvre, he can quickly create attacking opportunities.

29...cxb4 30 ♕xb4 h5

It has been suggested that Black should take the chance to advance with 30...b5 to avoid being smothered. However, after 31 axb6 ♕xb6 32 c5! dxc5 (or 32...♕a7 33 c6 ♖c7 34 ♕xd6! ♖xd6 35 ♖xg4 and White is winning) 33 ♕xc5 ♕xc5 34 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 35 ♖xc5 I think White is still much better; e.g. 35...♖b2 36 ♖e3 ♖xf2 37 ♖c2.

31 ♖b6 ♕xb6 32 axb6 ♖e7 33 ♖a3

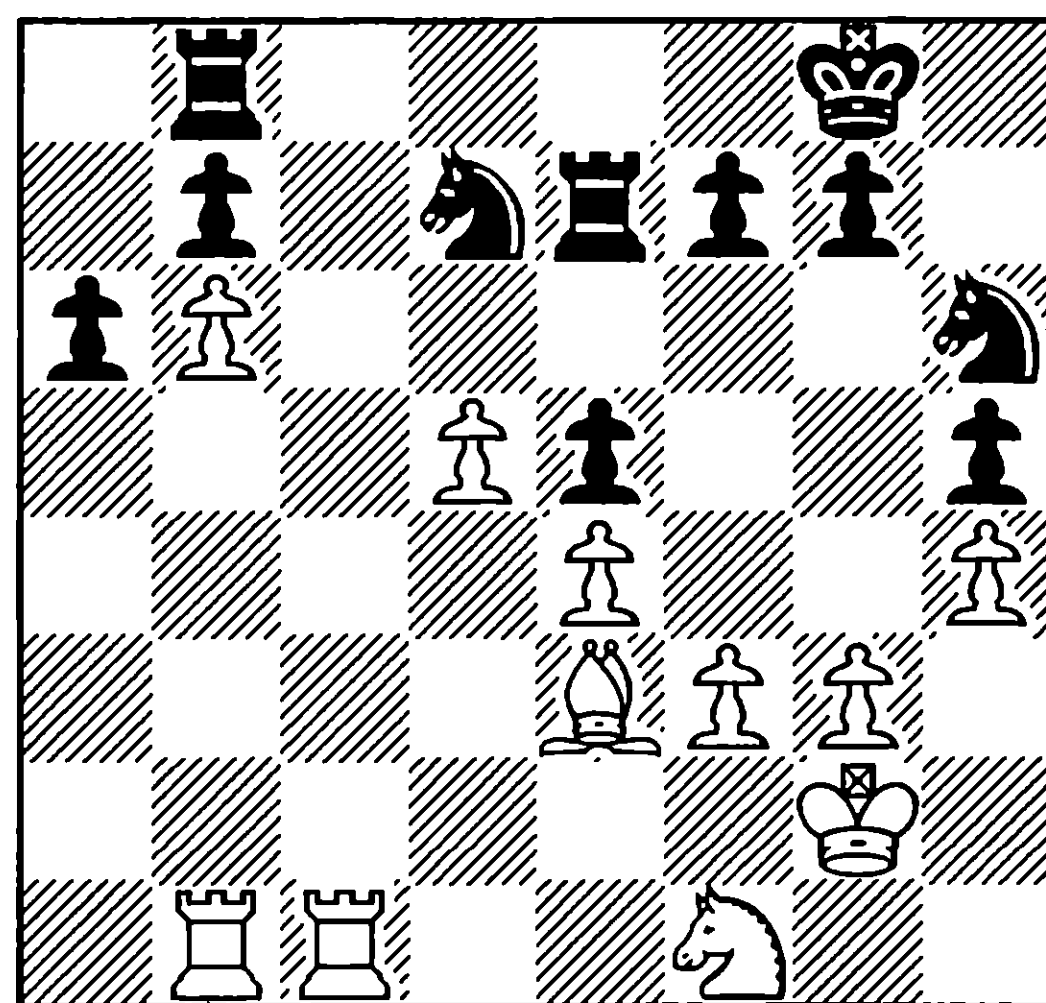
White is applying constant pressure by making sure that Black is on the defensive in cramped conditions. These positions require a lot of energy to defend and, perhaps just as importantly, can often lead to time-trouble due to the need to avoid impending disaster

on every move.

33...♖d8 34 f3 ♗h6 35 c5 dxc5 36 ♕xc5 ♖f6 37 ♖g2

Instead 37 ♕e7? looks like a winning move, but then Black escapes with 37...♖xb6+.

37...♖e8 38 ♕e3 ♖d7 39 ♖ab1 ♖e7?! 40 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 1-0



Here Black lost on time in a terrible position. White could have continued with 41 ♖c7, pinning the knight and threatening 42 d6.

“Creativity and order must reign together to guide calculation.” – Garry Kasparov.

A more direct attack is the theme in the next game:

Game 23

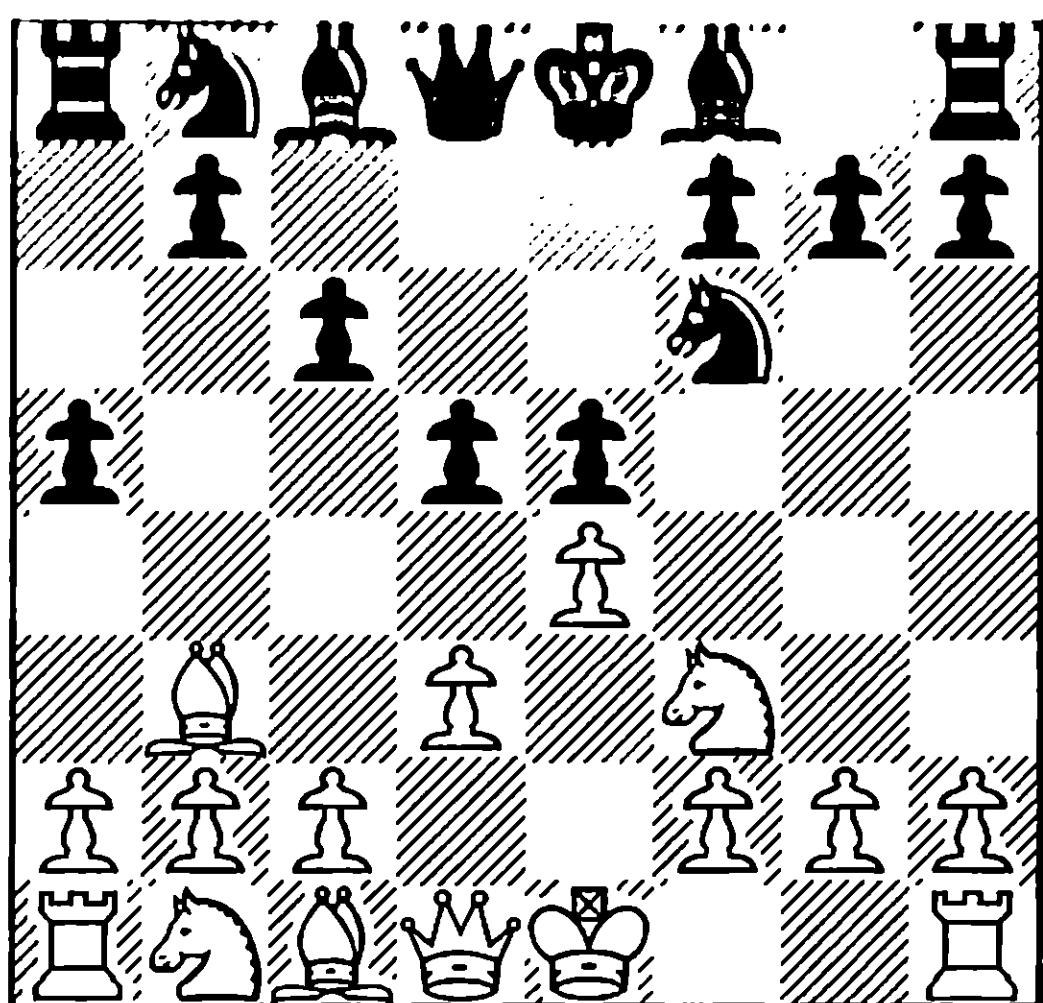
G.Lane-L.Henris

Brussels 1995

Bishop's Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♕c4 ♖f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♖f3 d5 5

b3 a5



Black decides to expand on the queenside; the initial threat is to trap the bishop with ...a5-a4.

6 a3

I like this move which gives some room for the bishop and cancels out a future ...b4 by Black. Alternatively, 6 c3 b4 (6...d4?! seems to win a piece but is exposed as a mistake after 7 cxe5! dxc3 8 cxf7 when White is on top) 7 a3 bxc3+ 8 bxc3 b7 9 exd5 cxd5 10 0-0 0-0 11 e1 e8 (or 11...cxc3 12 d2 d5 13 b2 f6 14 d4 with a strong initiative) 12 c4 e7 13 g5 h6 14 e4 a4 15 a2 c5 (Black acts to block in the bishop on a2) 16 d6 f8 17 c3 led to a slight edge for White in G.Kasparov-E.Bareev, Linares 1993.

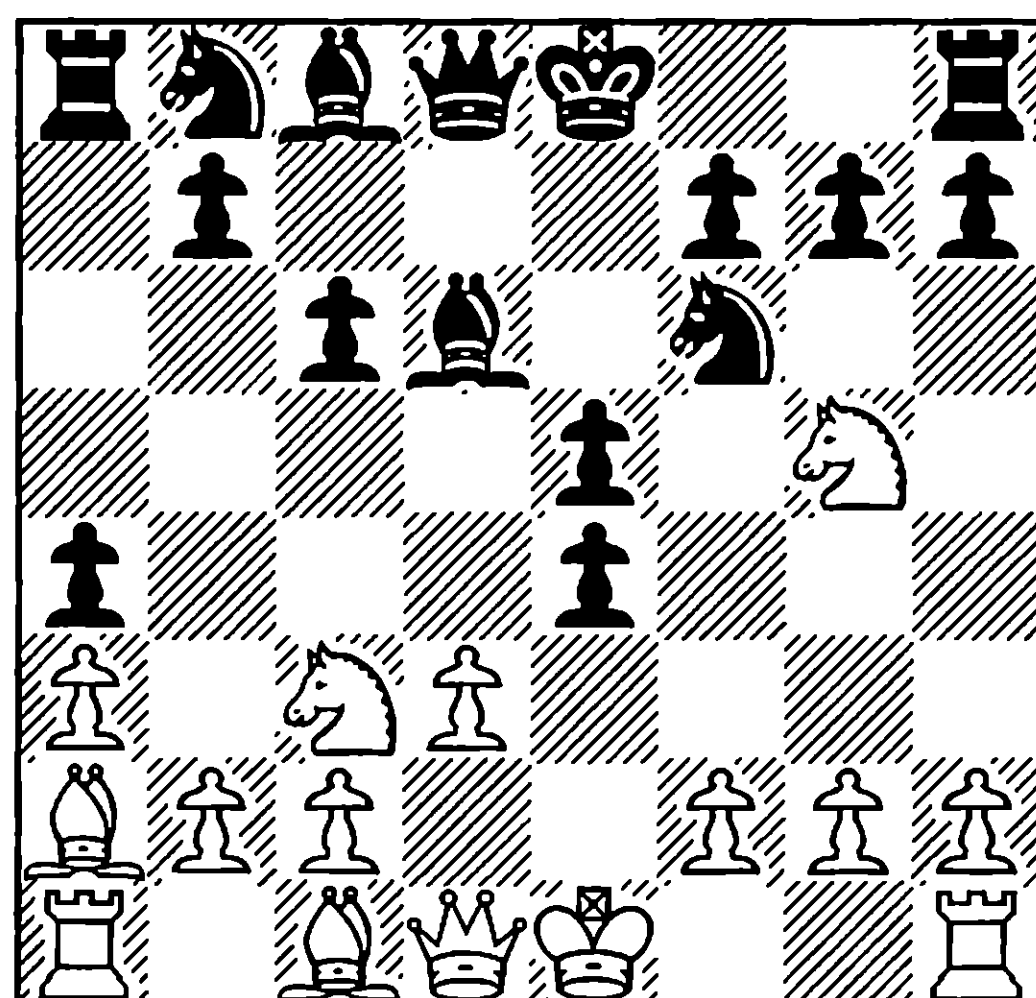
6...a4

Instead, 6...d6 7 exd5 (7 c3 is also possible) 7...a4 8 a2 cxd5 9 0-0 0-0 10 e1 g4 11 b2 d7 12 h3 h5 13 c4 led to roughly equal chances in C.Bauer-P.Drenchev, Metz 2009.

7 a2 d6 8 c3 dxe4

This has the merit of stopping White from constantly threatening the pawn centre, but it does increase the influence of the bishop on a2. In the game A.Borisenko-S.Mikheev, Moscow 2008, Black tried to bolster his pawn centre with 8...e6 and White endeavoured to undermine it: 9 g5 d4 10 e2 h6 11 h4 b7 12 g3 c5 13 c3 b6 14 0-0 0-0 (if 14...xb2, then 15 xe6 fxe6 16 cxd4 cxd4 17 exd4! gives White the advantage) 15 h3 a6 16 e1 fd8 17 cxd4 cxd4 18 xe6 fxe6 19 f4 exf4 20 xf4 xf4 21 xxf4 e5 22 f3 d6 23 c1 eg4? (23...fd7 was a better idea) 24 d2 e5 25 xe5 xe5 26 b4! ac8? 27 g6 1-0.

9 g5



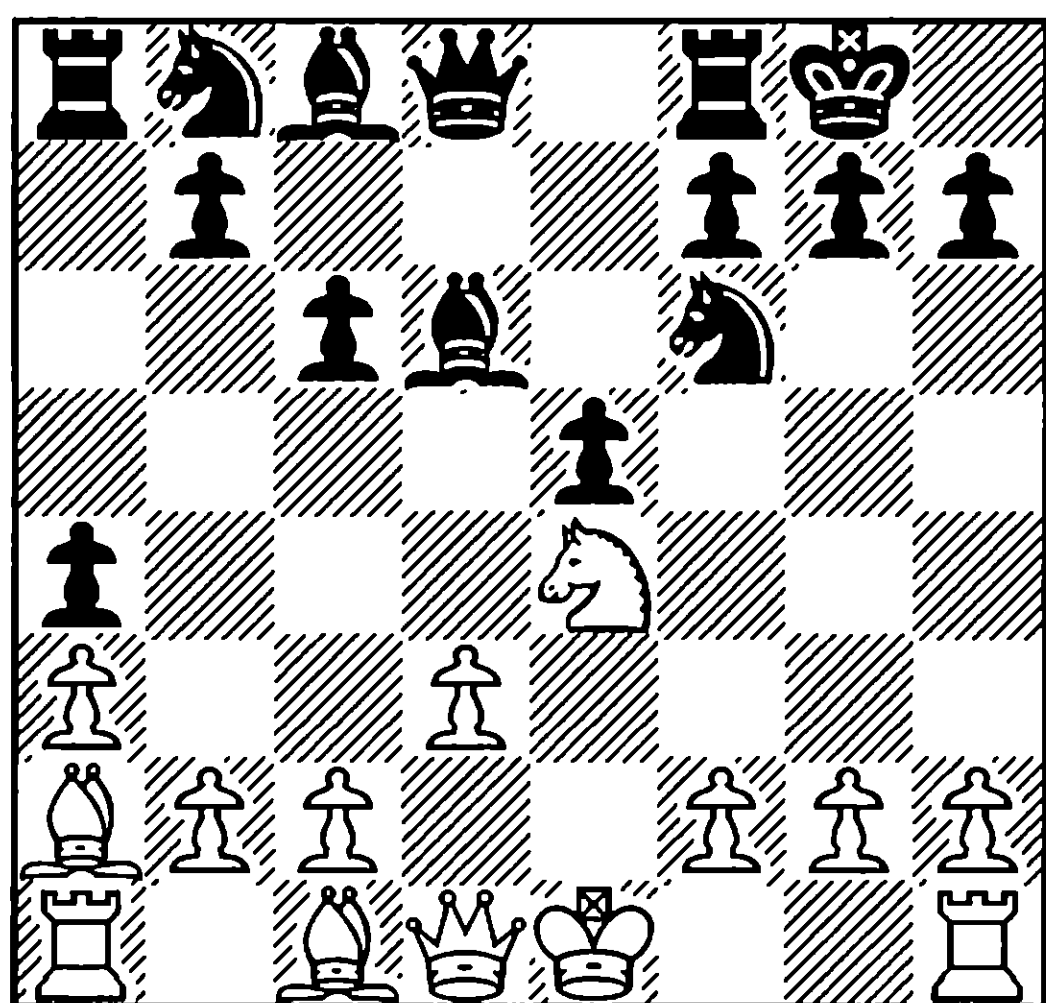
This is a direct way of causing Black some problems in the opening. I had also tried 9 dxe4 in a game against English grandmaster Matthew Sadler in London 1994, but was unable to make an impact against a stout defence: 9...e7 10 0-0 e6 11 h4 g6 (a

good move to block out the knight; at the time I felt this was a concession because it weakens his kingside dark-squares but it is not easy to exploit it) 12 h3 (12 ♖h6 is answered by 12...♘g4! 13 ♖xe6 ♘xh6 14 ♖a2 0-0 with equal chances) 12...♙xa2 13 ♖xa2 ♘bd7 14 ♖a1 ♘c5 15 ♖e1 0-0 16 ♖g5 ♙g7, also with roughly equal chances, and a draw was agreed after 44 moves.

9...0-0 10 ♘gxe4 ♘xe4

If Black dawdles and retreats the bishop out of reach with 10...♙c7, then 11 ♖g5 ♘bd7 12 ♙f3 gives White decent pressure due to the pin. I think the immediate 10...♙e7 is the best chance to mount a strong defence.

11 ♘xe4



11...♙e7

A defensive measure that is not in keeping with Henris' usual aggressive style, but he has little choice because Black has no obvious counterplay. If 11...♙c7, then 12 ♙h5 and the queen is handily placed for the attack, when 12...h6? would be a disaster due to 13 ♖xh6 gxh6 14 ♙g6+ ♙h8 15 ♙xh6+

♙g8 16 ♙f6+ and Black can go home. He should really take a serious look at 11...♙f5! which is solid.

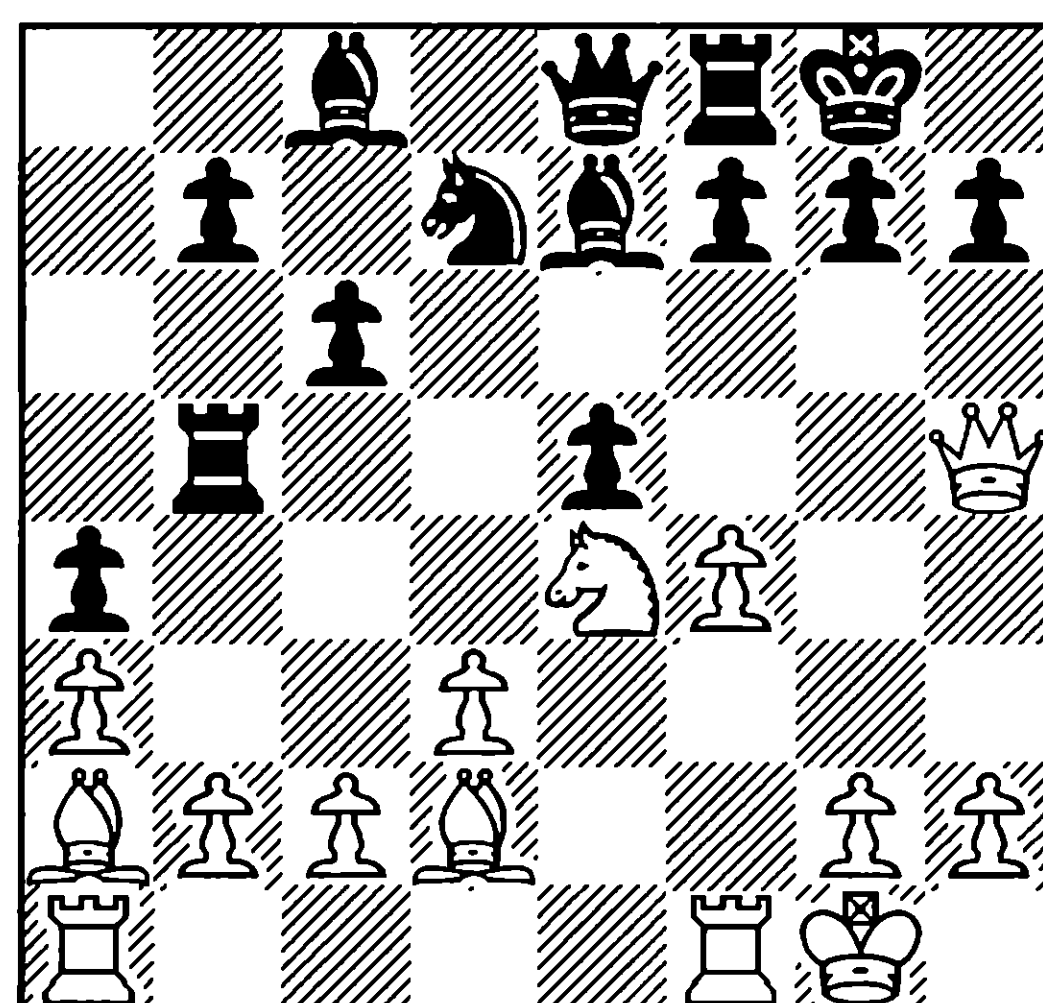
12 ♙h5 ♘d7 13 0-0

Getting the king into safety and at the same time bringing the king's rook into the game by preparing f2-f4.

13...♙e8

After the game the Belgian international indicated that he wanted to add some weight to the defence of the f7-pawn and prepare ...f7-f5 to exchange queens.

14 f4 ♖a5 15 ♖d2 ♖b5



16 ♖c4!

I wanted to deflect the rook away from the fifth rank so I could take on e5 without having to contend with ...♖xe5.

16...♖xb2 17 fxe5 ♖xc2 18 ♖xf7! ♖xc4

Probably 18...♖xf7 is the best chance, although 19 e6 ♖xc4 20 exf7+ ♙xf7 21 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 22 dxc4 gives White a good ending.

19 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 20 dxc4

A quick look at the position indicates that White is the exchange up and his attack is still raging.

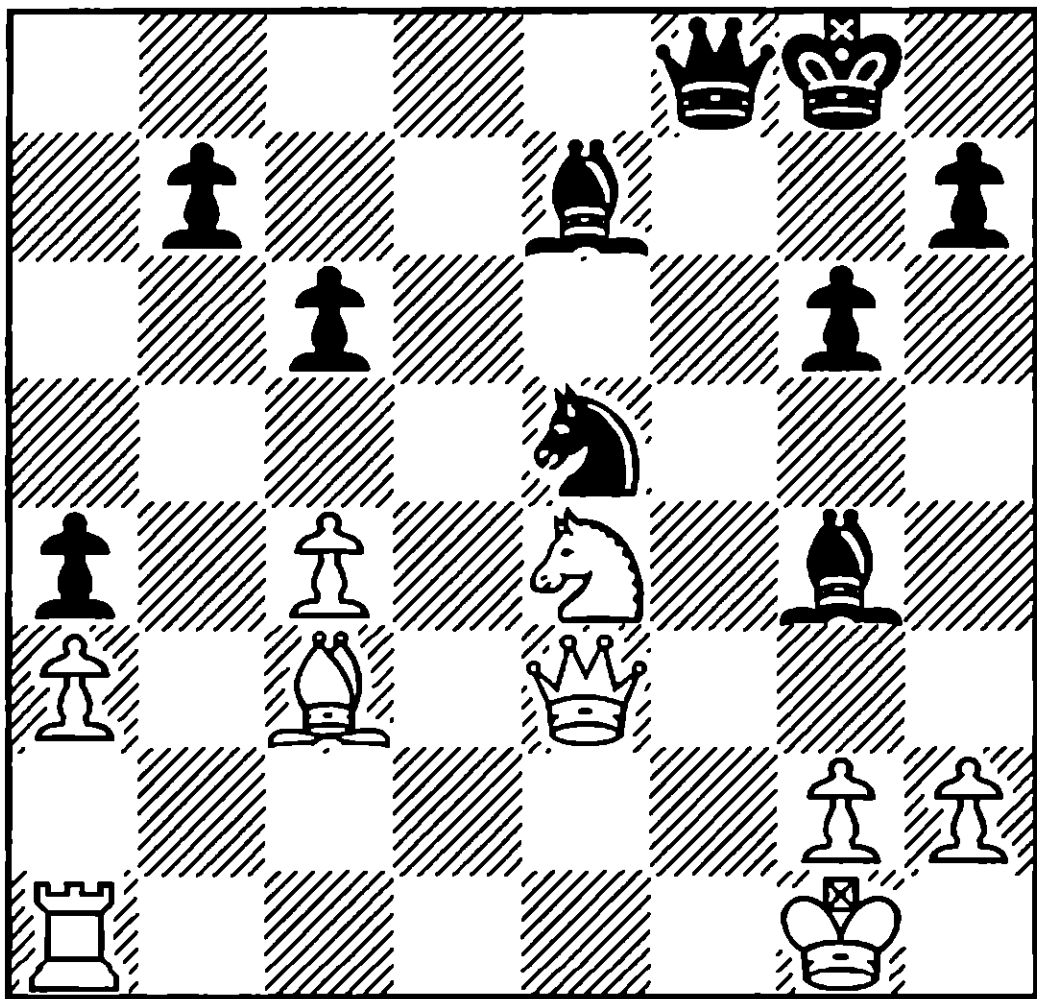
20...g6 21 ♖e2 ♜xe1 22 ♜c1

Black has grabbed a pawn back but the price is that White is rewarded with strong play on the a1-h8 diagonal.

22...♗g4

22...♞d7 23 ♖f1 ♜d8 24 ♜f2 wins.

23 ♜e3



23...♜f5?

A final mistake which loses a piece.

24 ♞g3 1-0

“How does Tal win? It is very simple: He places his pieces in the centre and then sacrifices them somewhere.” – David Bronstein.

Mikhail Tal (1936-1992) was a magnificent attacking player who inspired generations to prepare to attack in their games. The Latvian won the World Championship from Botvinnik in 1960, but lost the return match the following year. He was a hero amongst players who loved to see their stars strive to win at all costs. He was described as “full of nervous energy, chain smoking at the board, pacing

restlessly between moves.” His legacy is a collection of glorious games. Here are a couple to give a hint of how to attack after the opening when you have a lead in development:

Game 24

M.Tal-W.Uhlmann

Moscow 1971

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞d2

3 ♞c3 is the main alternative, when the Winawer with 3...♗b4 is considered a major line. One of the reasons why 3 ♞d2 is so popular is that it avoids such a heavily analysed variation.

3...c5

A solid line of the French, which is to be expected from a world renowned expert on the opening.

4 ♞gf3 ♞c6 5 ♗b5 dxe4 6 ♞xe4 ♗d7 7 ♗g5! ♜a5+

Tal intended to meet 7...♜b6 by 8 ♜e2 cxd4 9 0-0-0 with the initiative. Not 7...♗e7? due to 8 ♞d6+! ♜f8 9 ♞xb7 ♜b6 10 ♞xc5 and White is certainly on top.

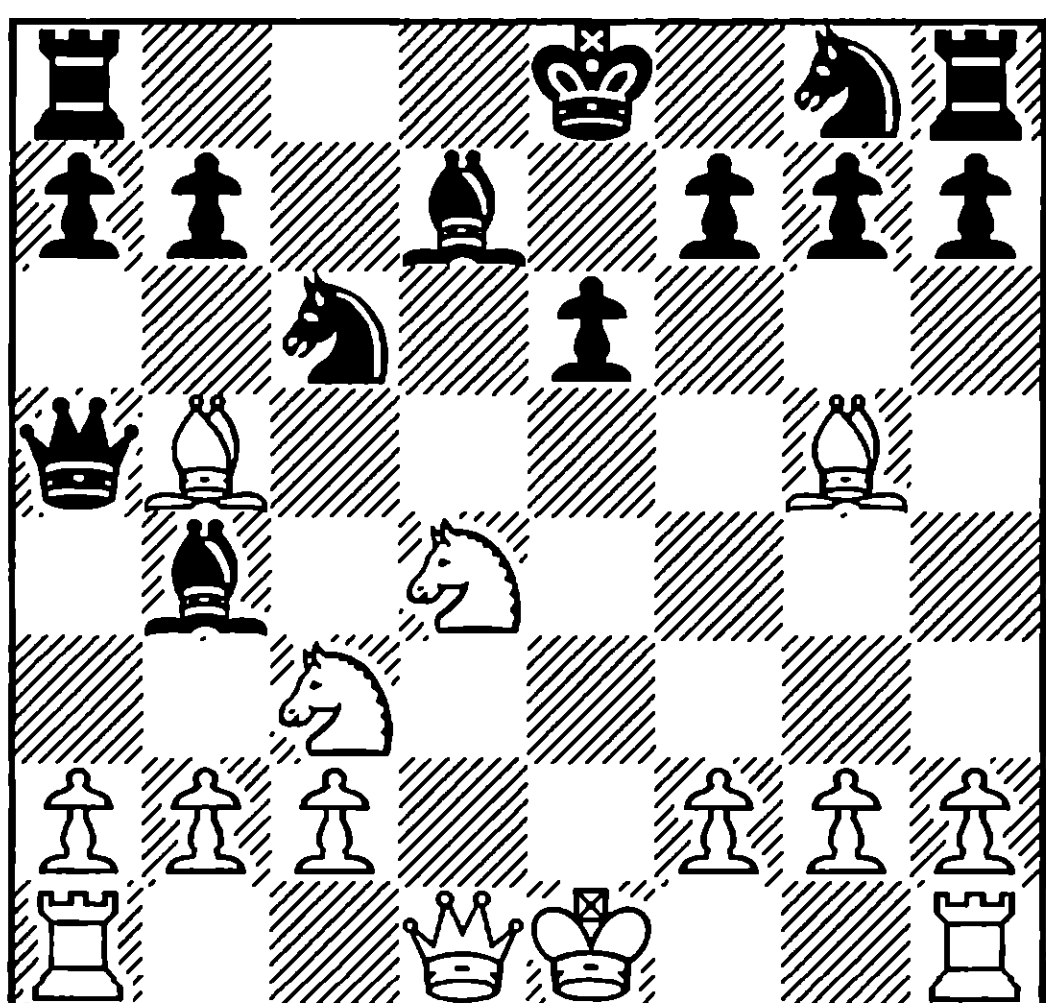
8 ♞c3 cxd4 9 ♞xd4 ♗b4?!

Black spots a chance to win a pawn, but this hinders development which was not a good idea against Tal who already had a reputation for giving away material – so a mere pawn would hardly be noticed as long as the position was encouraging an attack. The demolition by Tal must have struck a

nerve because, years later, the German grandmaster defended the honour of the variation by improving with 9...♙e7! and then:

a) 10 ♖d2 ♘f6 (10...♙xg5? 11 ♖xg5 ♘xd4? 12 ♙xd7+ wins due to the discovered attack on the black queen) 11 0-0-0 ♖d8 12 ♘b3 ♙c7 with equal chances, T.Horvath-W.Uhlmann, Austrian Team Championship 2005.

b) 10 ♙xe7 ♘gxe7 11 0-0 0-0 (11...♙b4 can be safely met by 12 ♘b3) 12 ♘b3 ♙c7 13 ♖e1 also gave Black a perfectly acceptable position in P.Rooze-W.Uhlmann, World Seniors Championship, Bad Zwischenahn 2008.



10 0-0!

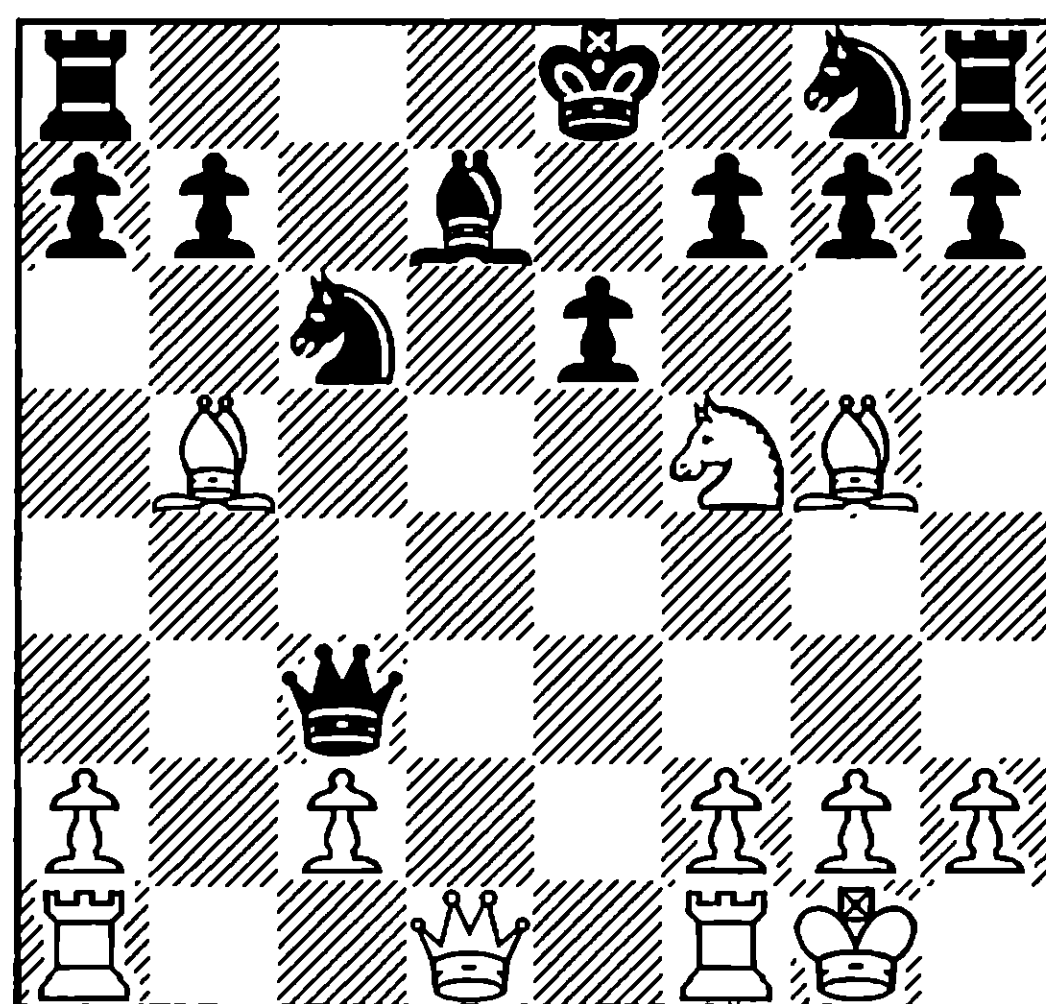
White carries on getting his pieces into the action, while making sure his king is out of the way.

10...♙xc3 11 bxc3 ♙xc3

If Black can get away with this then the extra pawn will prove to be useful. The warning signs are that White's pieces are well co-ordinated, while the black king is still sitting serenely on its starting square.

But if instead 11...a6 12 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 13 ♘xc6 ♙xg5, then 14 ♖d6! ♖d5 (or 14...♘e7 15 ♖fd1! ♘xc6 16 ♖d7+ ♙f8 17 ♖xb7) 15 ♖xd5 exd5 16 ♖fe1+ ♙f8 (not 16...♙d7? 17 ♘e5+ ♙e7 18 ♘g6! and wins) 17 ♘d4 ♘f6 18 ♖eb1! b5 19 a4 and the ending favours White.

12 ♘f5!!



This is a typical Tal move, which offers a piece in return for a lightning attack. I think it is safe to say that Black missed the depth and strength of the attack, because he apparently sank into thought for one hour and fifty minutes.

12...exf5

The refusal of the sacrifice leaves Black in dire straits. For instance: 12...♙c5 13 ♘d6+ ♙f8 14 ♙e3 ♙e5 15 ♖b1 ♖b8 16 ♖e1 with a big advantage.

13 ♖e1+ ♙e6 14 ♖d6

The position is clearly awkward for Black – even if White did not calculate every possible line it is clear that, with so many pieces lined up against the king, something has to be right. Perhaps the key point is that it is far from obvious how Black can extract his king

from such a perilous position without losing significant material

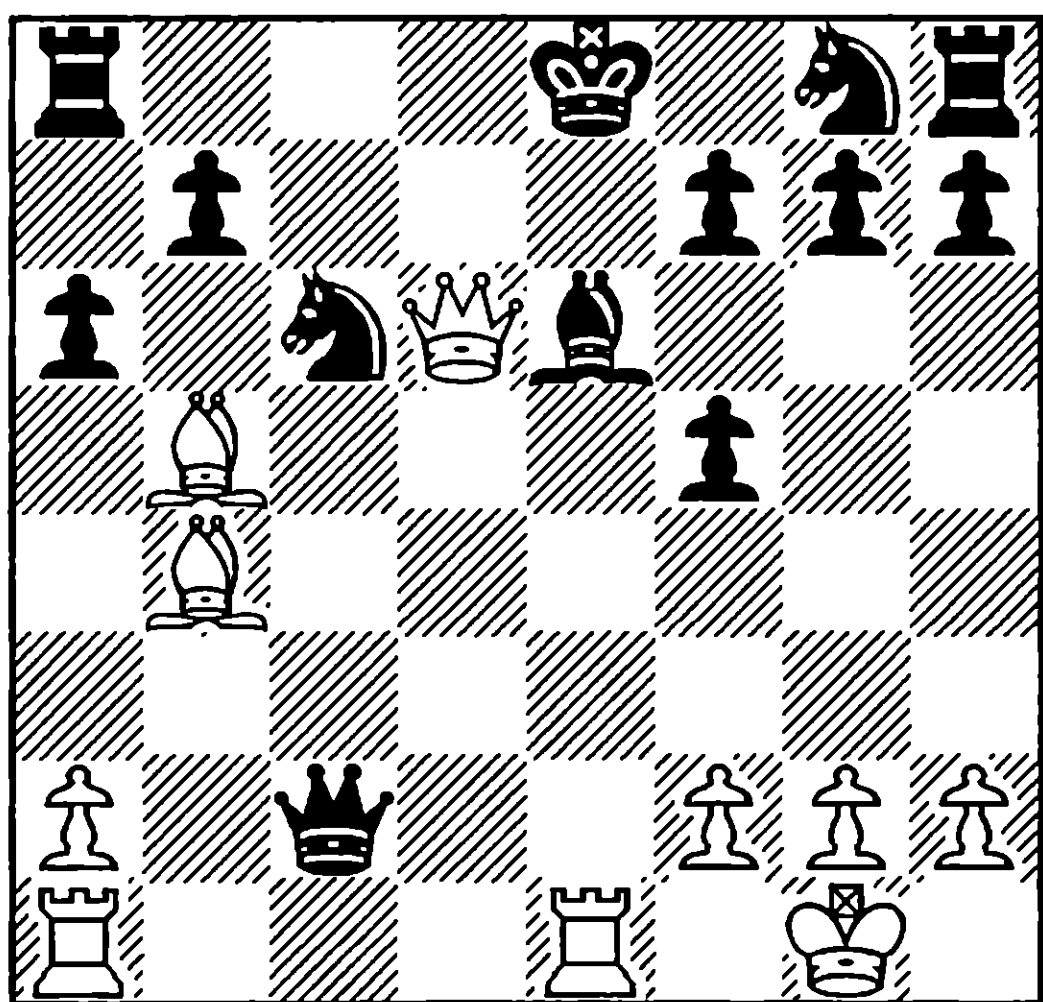
14...a6

The natural move 14...Qf6 is fatally undermined by 15 Rxd1, when White has a decisive grip on the position because the black king cannot move away from danger; e.g. 15...a6 (or 15...h6 16 Qxf6 gxf6 17 Rxe6+! fxe6 18 Qxe6+ Qf8 19 Rxd7 winning) 16 Qxf6 gxf6 17 Rxe6+ fxe6 18 Qxe6+ Qf8 19 Rxd7 Qa1+ 20 Qf1 and Black will be mated.

15 Qd2!

A crafty idea: the bishop changes diagonals to support the cause of checkmate. Instead, 15 Qa4?! b5 16 Qd2 Qc4 17 Qb3 Qd8! 18 Qc7 Qd7 is equal according to Tal.

15...Qxc2 16 Qb4!



It would be wrong to proceed with the obvious 16 Rxc1? because of the shocking 16...Qxc1!, when the tactics suddenly go against White; e.g. 17 Rxc1 axb5 18 Rxc6 Qd8! and White is in big trouble.

16...axb5 17 Qf8+ Qd7 18 Rxd1! Qc7 19 Qxa8 1-0

Black's cause is hopeless. For example: 19...Qa4 20 Qd6+ Qb6 21 Qf8 Qh4 22 Qc5+ Qc7 23 Rxc1! Qf6 24 Qd6+ Qc8 25 Qb6 Qe7 26 Qd8+ Qxd8 27 Rxd8 mate.

“Tal doesn’t move the pieces by hand; he uses a magic wand.” – Viacheslav Ragozin.

Here is another brilliant example showing that it can be a costly experience to neglect your development, as after the opening the attack is easier to prepare:

Game 25

M.Tal-B.Larsen

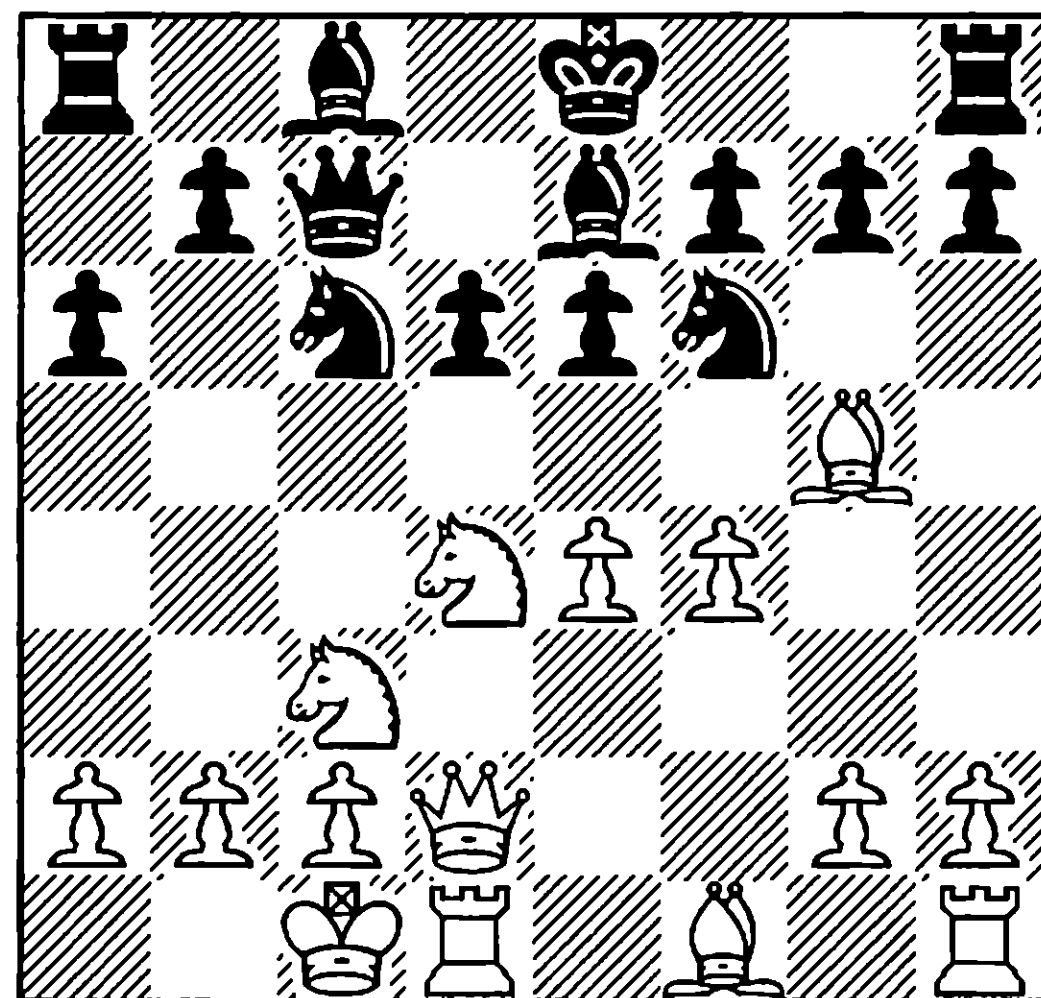
Montreal 1979

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Qg5

This is known as the Richter-Rauzer Attack.

6...e6 7 Qd2 Qe7 8 0-0-0 a6 9 f4 Qc7?!

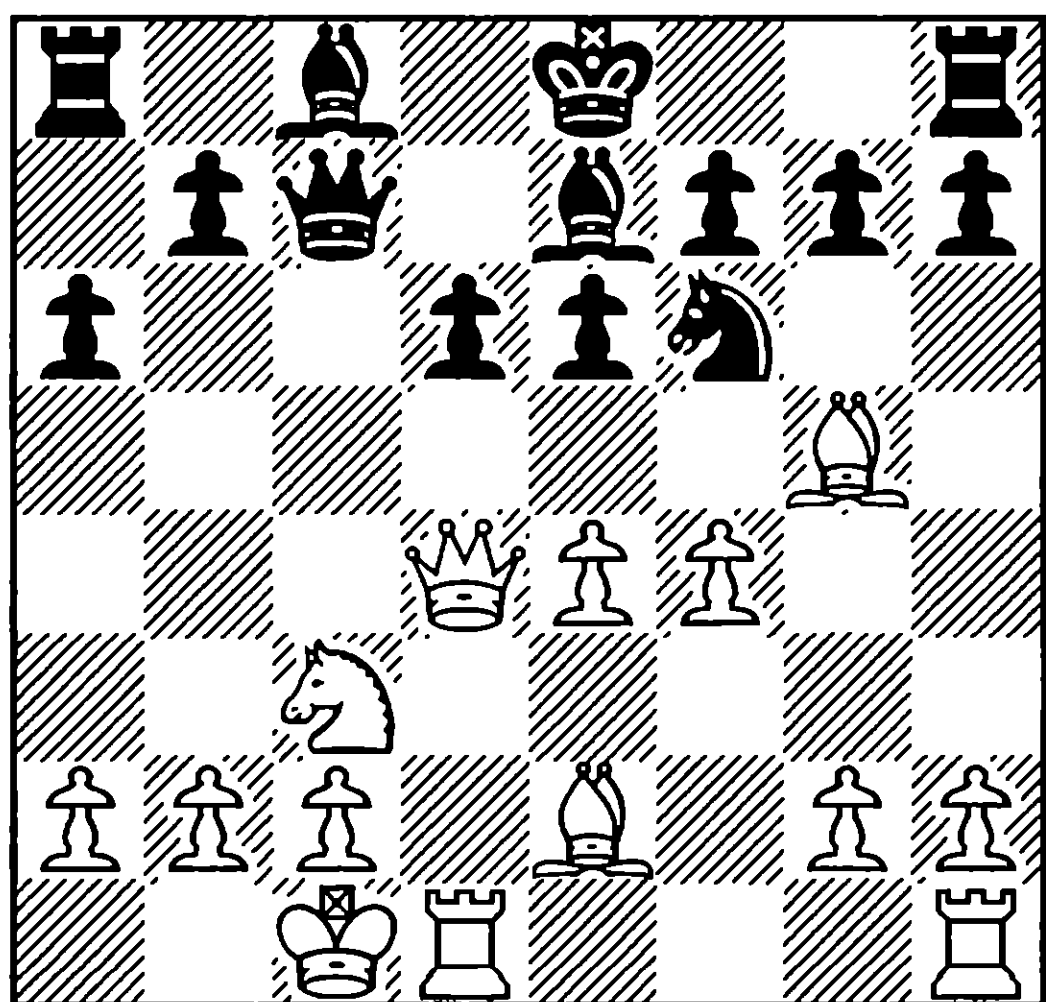


After this sensational game the opinion of this queen move dipped dramatically and other ideas were formulated instead. Nowadays, 9...♞xd4 10 ♚xd4 b5 11 ♙xf6 gxf6 is the most popular line with top grandmasters.

10 ♙e2 ♞xd4?!

This releases the tension and allows White to exert pressure along the d-file. Instead: 10...♙d7 11 ♞b3 ♚d8 (maybe 11...0-0-0 should be considered) 12 ♙xf6 gxf6 13 ♙h5 b5 14 f5 0-0 15 ♚h6 ♞e5 16 ♞d4 b4 (16...♚c8!? might be better, preventing the c3-knight from moving due to the threat of mate on c2) 17 fxe6 ♙xe6 18 ♞f5! ♙xf5 19 ♞d5 led to a big plus in M.Leon Hoyos-R.Folkeringa, Guingamp-Pabu 2010.

11 ♚xd4

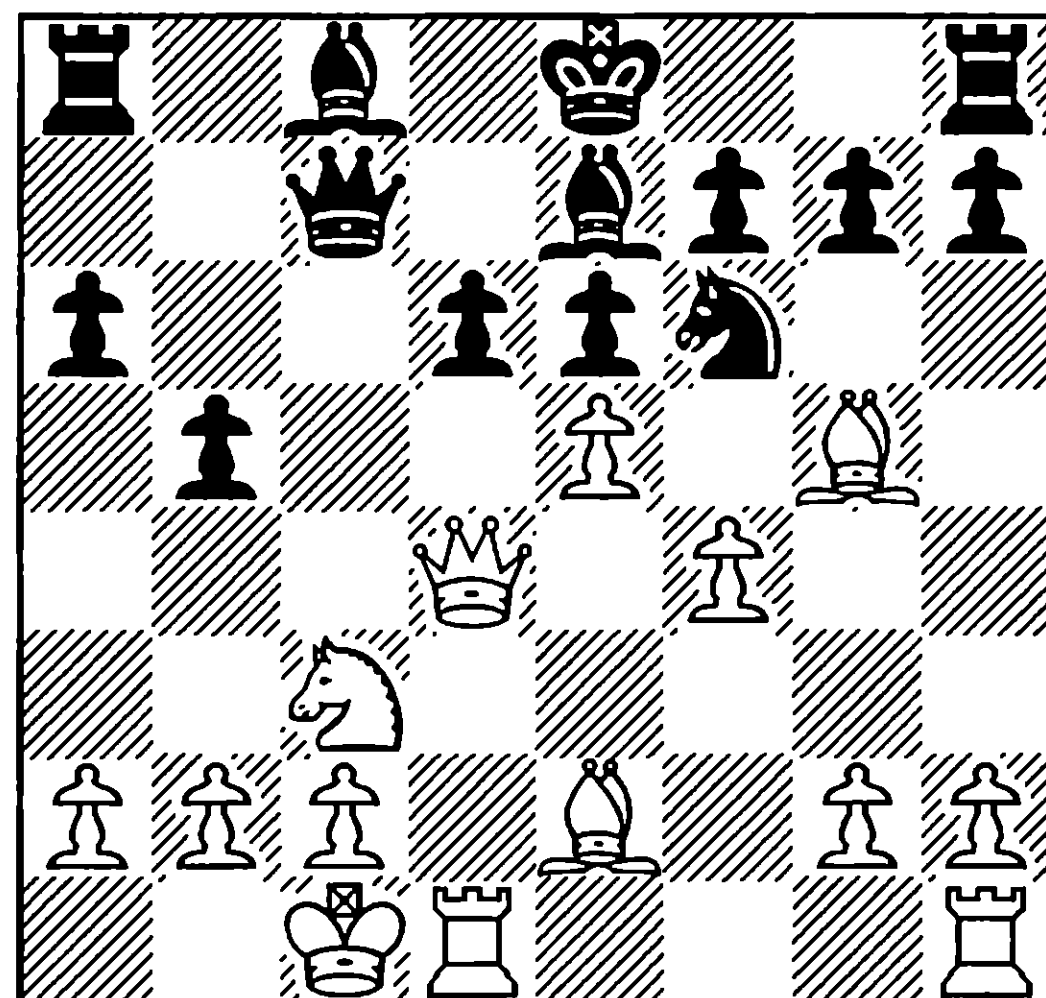


11...b5

In the game B.Zminda-J.Hajnrych, Lubawka 2009, Black tried to avoid an attack by offering to exchange queens with 11...♚c5, but it did not stem White's attacking prowess in the mid-game: 12 ♚xc5 dxc5 13 e5! ♞d7 14 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 15 ♙f3 ♚b8 16 ♞e4 b6 17

♞d6 16 18 exf6 gxf6 (18 ♙xf6 19 ♚he1 ♙d7 20 f5 is very strong) 19 ♚he1 h5 20 ♙c6 ♞f8 21 ♞xc8+ ♚xc8 22 ♙b7 when the extra pawn gave White a winning ending.

12 e5!



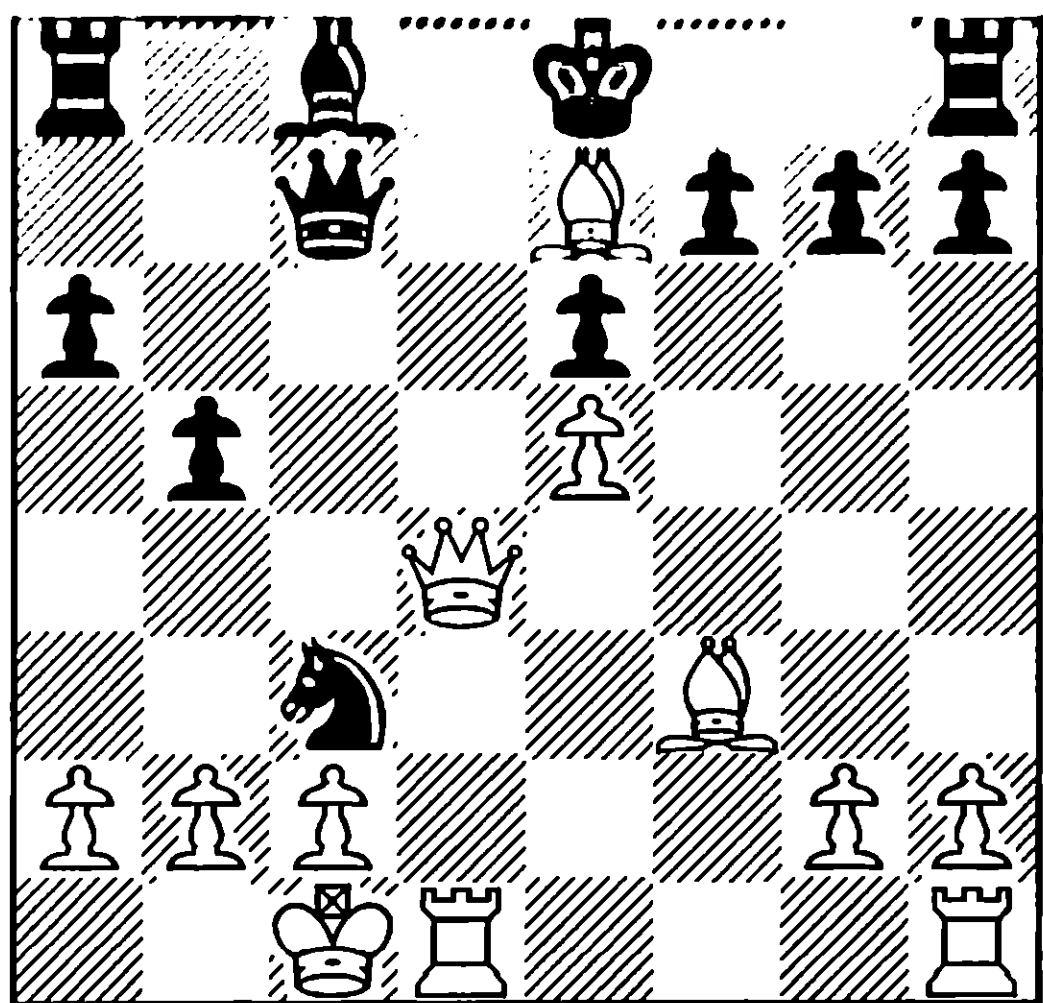
Tal is keen to disrupt Black's pieces before the opponent can consolidate by castling. White is relentless in pursuing the king, hugely aided by the lack of defensive options available to Black due to having too many pieces still waiting to be moved from their starting squares.

12...dxe5 13 fxe5 ♞d5

The attempt to fight back with 13...♙c5 backfires after 14 ♚f4 ♞d7 15 ♞e4 with excellent play, especially since the pawn is taboo in view of 15...♞xe5? 16 ♚xe5!, winning on the spot.

14 ♙xe7 ♞xc3

14...♞xe7 allows the crushing 15 ♞xb5! when Black's position is in ruins; e.g. 15...axb5 16 ♙xb5+ ♚f8 (or 16...♙d7 17 ♚xd7+ and wins) 17 ♚d8+ ♚xd8 18 ♚xd8 mate.



15...♖f3!

It is difficult to resist taking the rook but it soon turns out to be bad. The alternatives are hardly inspiring but at least there is a faint chance of Black surviving:

a) 15...♖b7? 16 ♖d6 ♔d7 (or 16...♖xf3 17 bxc3) 17 ♔xc3 and it is time for Black to count the pieces.

b) 15...♔xe7 16 bxc3! (more convincing than 16 ♔h4+ f6 17 exf6+ gxf6 18 ♔b4+ ♔f7 19 bxc3 ♖a7 or 18 ♔h6 ♖f8 19 ♖h5 ♖f7! with the idea 20 ♖xf7 ♔f4+! 21 ♔xf4 ♖e2+ and Black fights on) 16...♖b8 (16...♖b7 runs into 17 ♔d6+!) 17 ♔h4+ f6 18 exf6+ gxf6 19 ♔h6 ♖f8 and now 20 ♖h5! intending ♔g7+ is a winner.

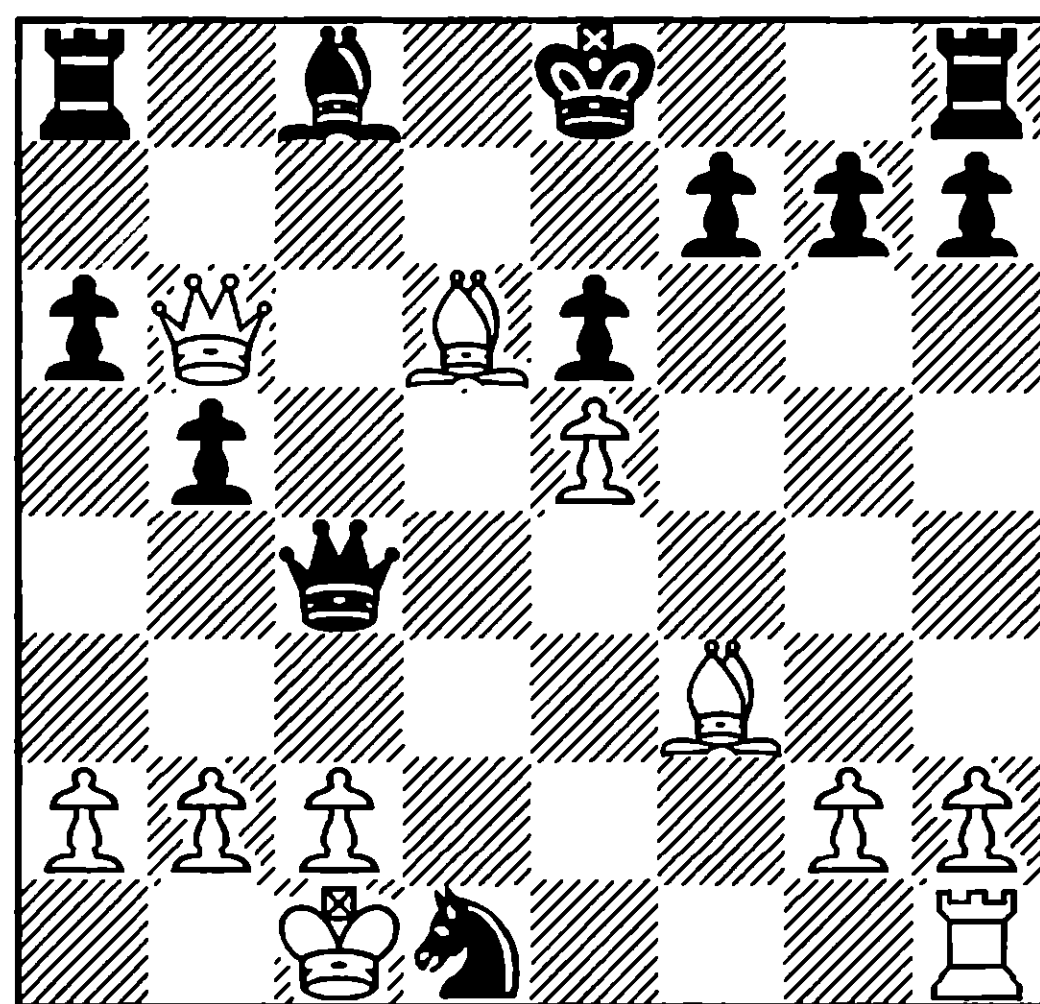
c) 15...♖e2+! (this is easily the best of the bunch) 16 ♖xe2 ♔xe7 17 ♖f3 ♖b7 18 ♖xb7 ♔xb7 19 ♔d6 ♖c8 (19...♔xg2? 20 ♔d7+! ♔f8 21 ♖hg1 ♔h3 22 ♔d6+ ♔e8 23 ♔c6+ or 21...♔e4 ♖gf1 f5 23 exf6 leads to mate) 20 ♖d2 ♔c6 21 ♖hd1 (21 ♔a3 is possible to avoid the ending) 21...♔xd6 22 ♖xd6

♖a8 23 ♖b6 with a clearly superior ending for White.

16 ♖d6! ♔c4

The other queen moves do not help either: 16...♔d7 allows 17 ♖xa8, while 16...♔a7 17 ♖c5 is hopeless for Black in view of 17...♔b8? 18 ♖c6+ and mates.

17 ♔b6!



Despite being a rook down, Tal's immediate priority is to avoid the exchange of the queens so the attack can carry on.

17...♖f2

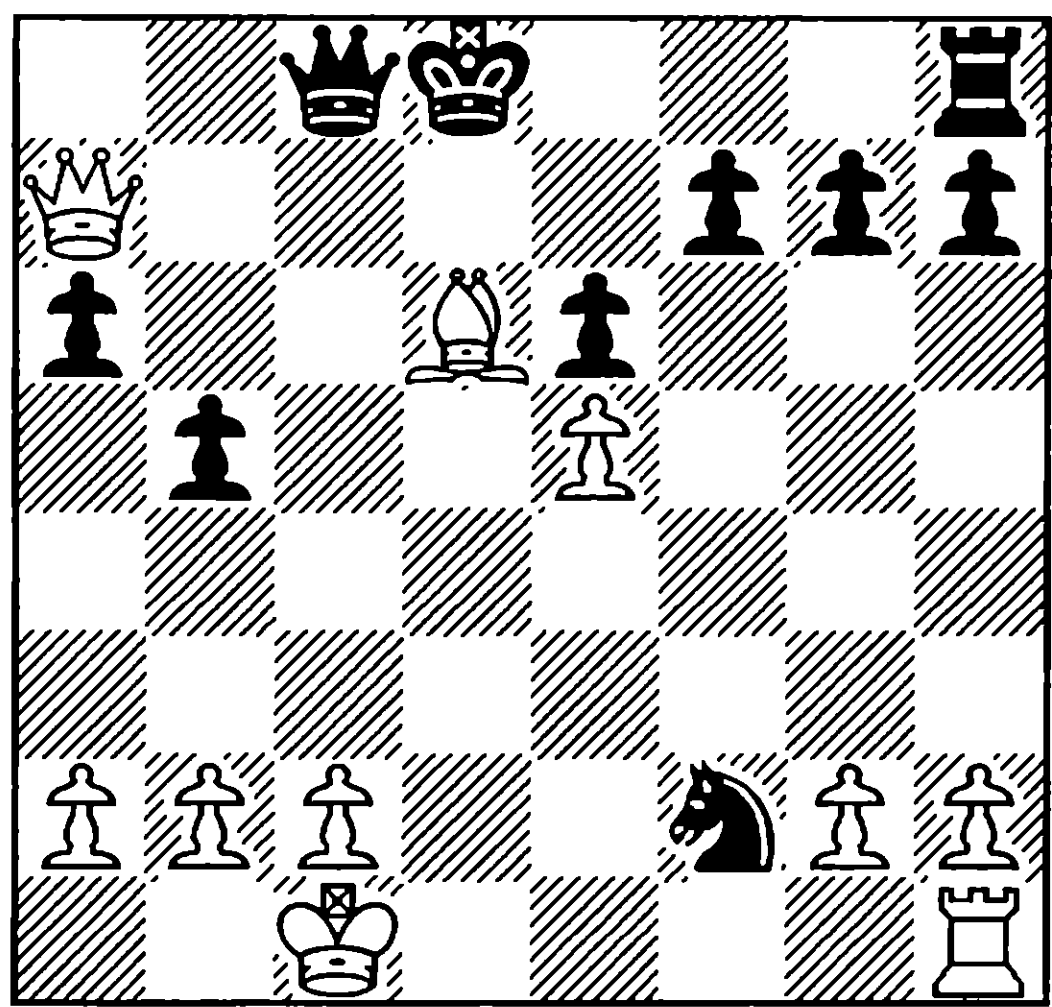
17...♖e3 is met simply by 18 ♔xe3 and White can look forward to taking the queen's rook next move.

18 ♖c6+

Tal has an abundance of good moves but spots a clearly winning one and wraps up the game. Naturally 18 ♖xa8 was also very good, as 18...♖xh1 allows 19 ♖c6+ ♖d7 20 ♔b8 mate. Black was hoping for the line 18 ♔xf2 ♔f4+ 19 ♔b1 ♖d7, though I don't really see much hope after 20 ♔b6! ♖c8 21 ♖b7 winning.

18...♖d7 19 ♖xd7+ ♔xd7 20 ♔b7+ ♔d8

21 ♖xa8+ ♜c8 22 ♖a7! 1-0



Black resigned due to the twin threats of mate on e7 and against the knight on f2.

“My head is filled with sunshine.” – Mikhail Tal, after he had won the World Championship Candidates tournament in 1959.

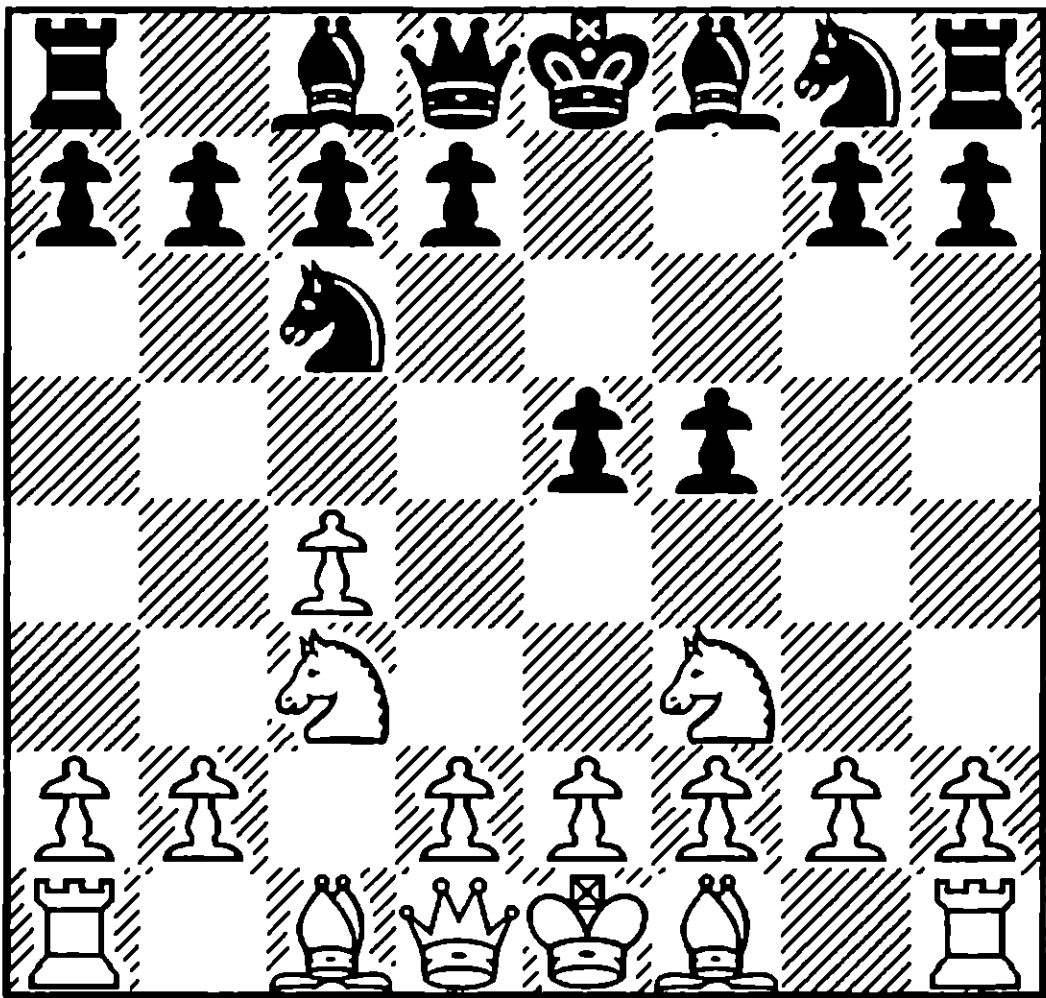
The benefit of playing something you know well is that it is easier to find the right plan to attack:

Game 26
C.McNab-D.Mason
British League 2004
English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 f5

Black is a player who likes to fight straight from the opening. The set-up here is a sort of Dutch Defence where Black’s standard positional goal of ...e7-e5 has already been achieved. Just before White resigns there are plenty of

ways of dealing with this opening. I think the best one is to encourage the black centre pawns to advance and then break up the extended pawn chain.



4 d4

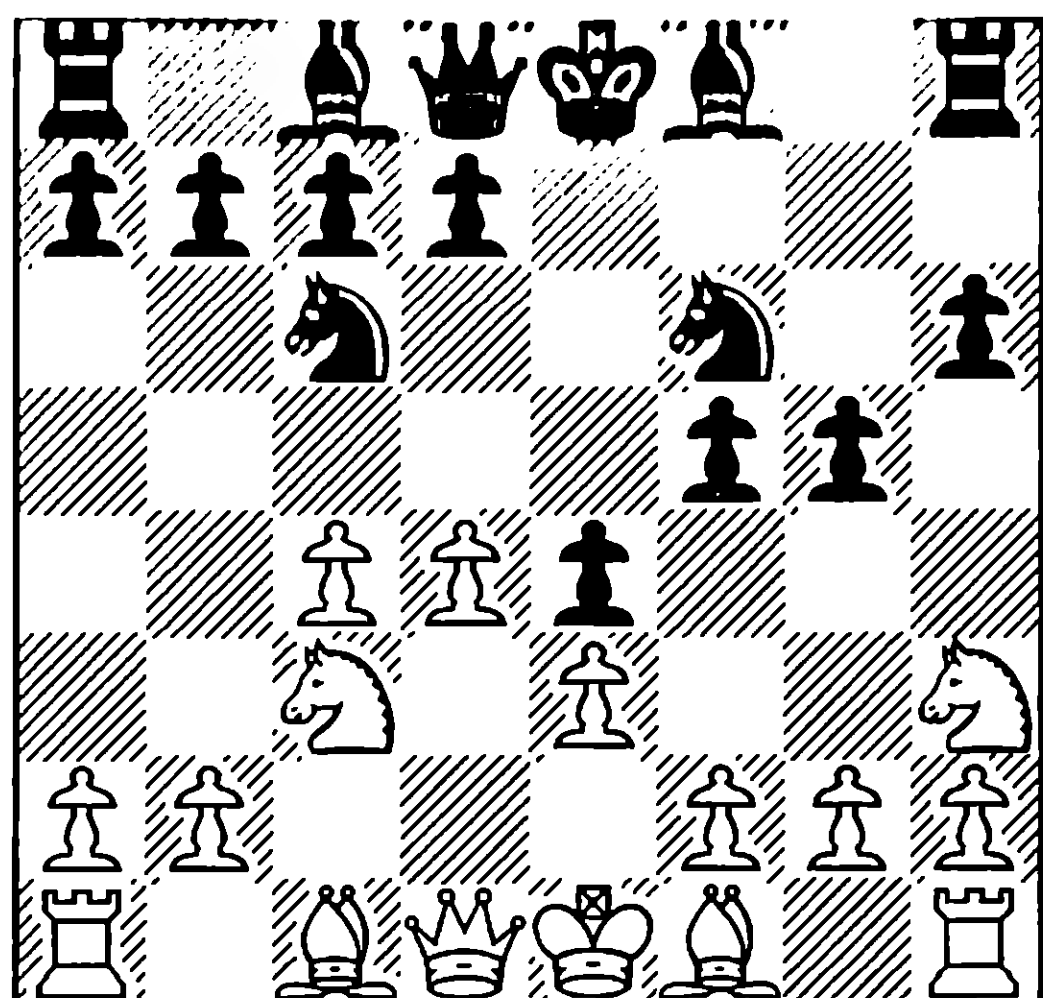
White has played this move before and uses his prior knowledge to strike at the centre before Black can consolidate.

4...e4 5 ♘g5

It looks a little crazy to allow the white knight to be chased around the board, but the argument is that in the long term Black is weakening his pawn structure. White has also tested 5 ♘g1 and 5 ♗g5.

5...h6 6 ♘h3 g5

Black does not wait for the knight to head for the d5-square via f4. I have played this as Black and it does catch out some White players who allow their pieces to be pushed back onto passive squares. Then again, the policy of advancing pawns in front of the king is bound to involve a certain amount of risk.

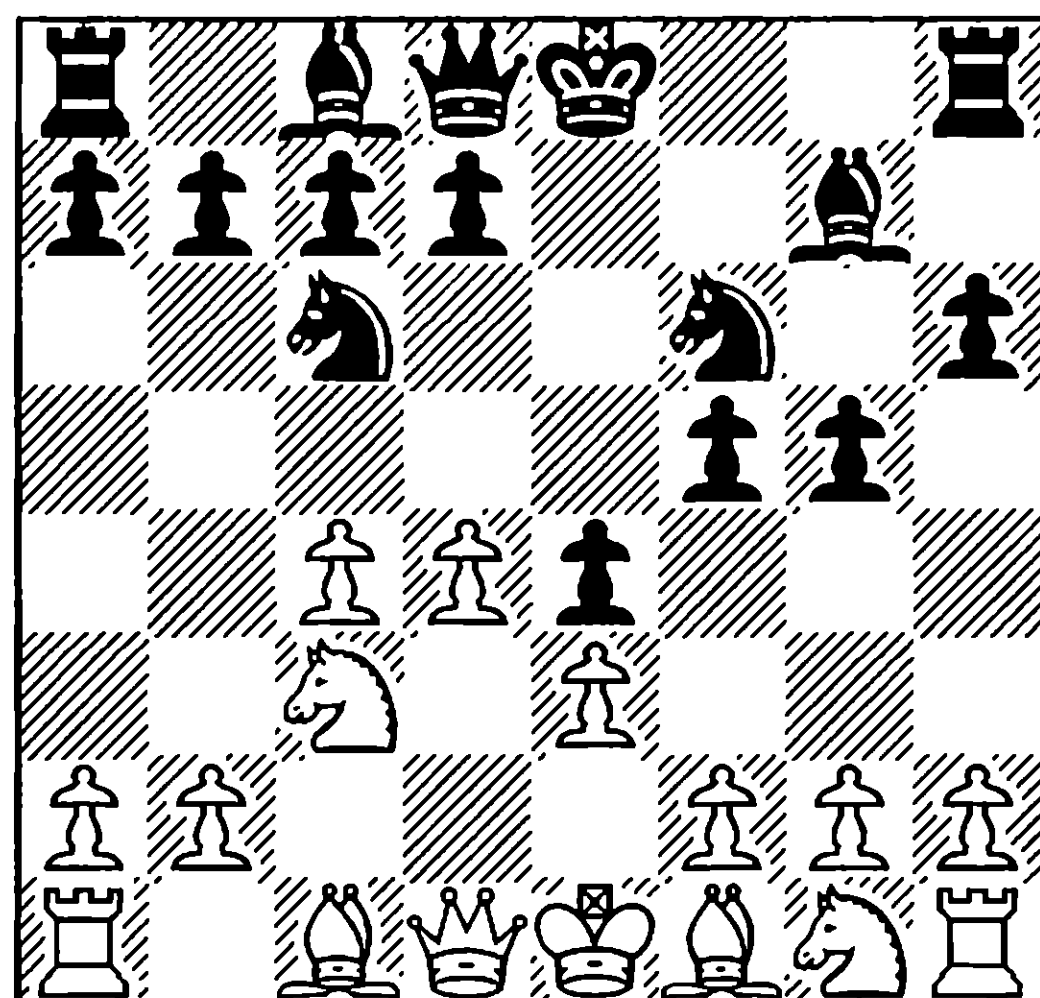


8 g1!?

After this unexpected retreat White intends to follow up with h2-h4 to put pressure on Black's kingside. 8 g1 looks like the sort of move that surely only the elite players can think up. But opening books allows the rest of us to play like stars and this manoeuvre is in fact well known. Maybe 8 f3 is also worth considering.

8...g7

The Scottish grandmaster playing White has a lot of experience in this variation. In the game C.McNab-S.Weeramantry, Gibraltar 2005, Black tried 8...e7 but lost after 9 h4 g6 (9...g4!? 10 ge2 h5 11 f4 is slightly better for White) 10 hxg5 hxg5 11 xh8 xh8 12 b3 d6 13 d2 c6 14 0-0-0 b6 (14...f7 to bring the knight back into the action seems sensible) 15 c2 d7 16 f3! d5 17 g4 exf3 (again 17...f7 is worth a try) 18 xf3 fxg4 19 xg5 dxc4 20 xc4 0-0-0 21 e6 e8? (an oversight in a difficult position; 21...xe6 was forced) 22 a4 xe6 23



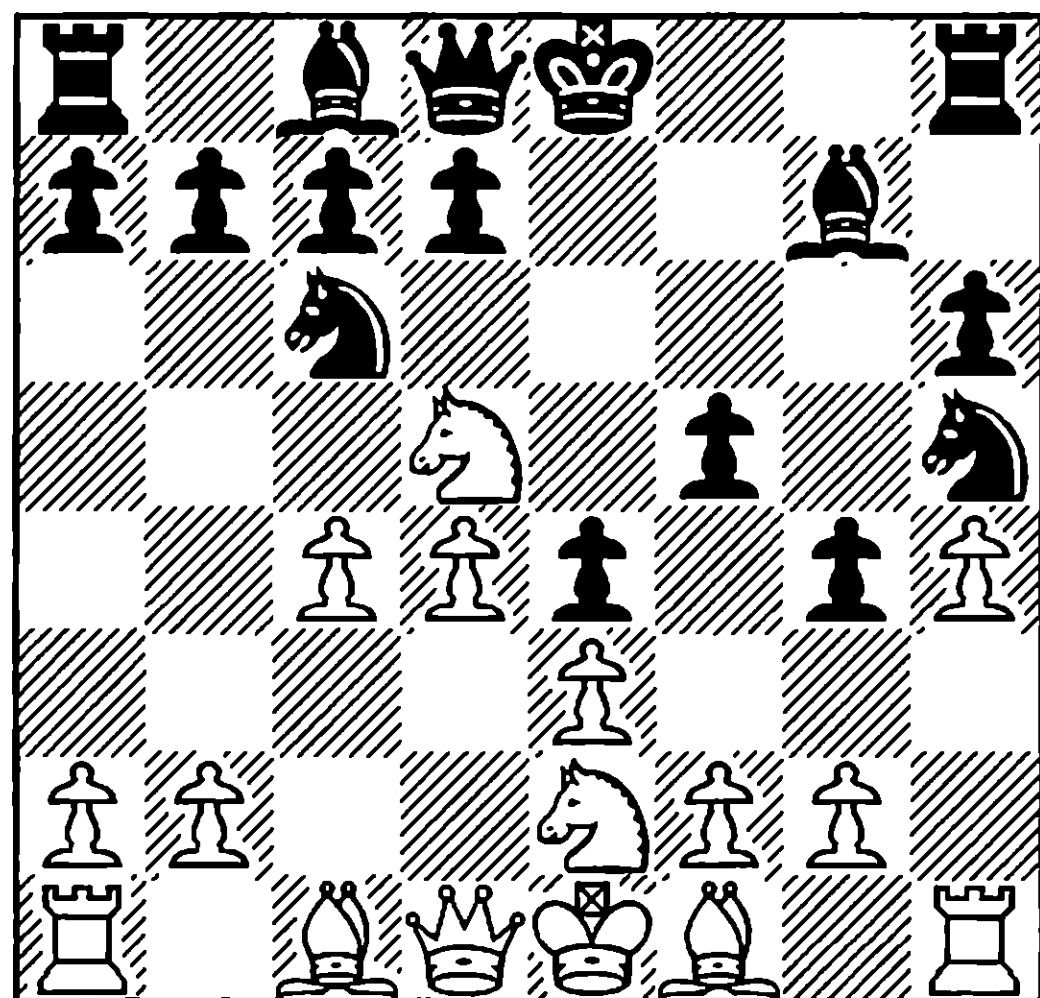
9 h4 g4

A very committal move, but this has been tested many times. I suspect more attention might be given to 9...e7 in the future if no improvements are found in the main game.

10 ge2 h5

The idea of having the knight on the edge of the board is to prevent the white knight coming to f4 (or g3), while the attacking player will try to find the right moment to play ...f5-f4.

11 d5



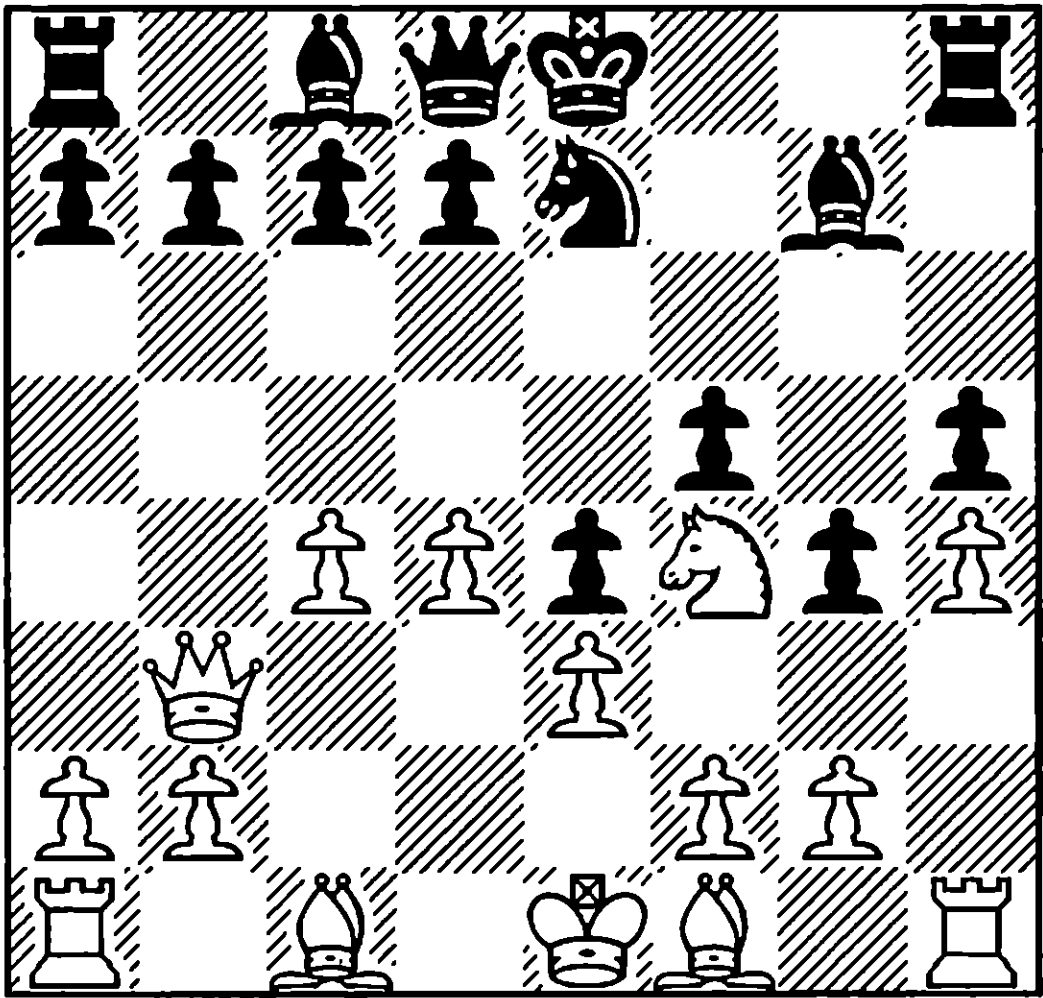
White is fighting to install a knight on the important f4-square, while

Black aims to make it only a temporary arrangement.

11...♘e7 12 ♘df4 ♘xf4 13 ♘xf4 h5 14 ♔b3

White has a straightforward mid-game plan of castling queenside and then trying to undermine the black kingside pawns with f2-f3 at the right moment. I think the reason why Black still plays this line is because it has been recommended in older sources due to the encounter M.Rohde-W.Browne, Philadelphia 1992, where the players battled out a tough game: 14 ♔d2 ♔h6!? (a theme recreated in the main game; Black plans ...♘g6 to challenge the white knight on f4) 15 ♔b3 d6 16 ♔c1 (16 0-0-0! is a better bet, when White can think about the best time to play c4-c5) 16...♘g6 17 ♘xg6 ♔xg6 18 g3 (18 c5 d5 19 g3 c6 20 ♔d1 planning to transfer the king to b1 is intriguing and I can't see how Black can benefit) 18...c6 19 ♔e2 ♔f6 20 ♔a3 led to equal chances.

14...♔h6



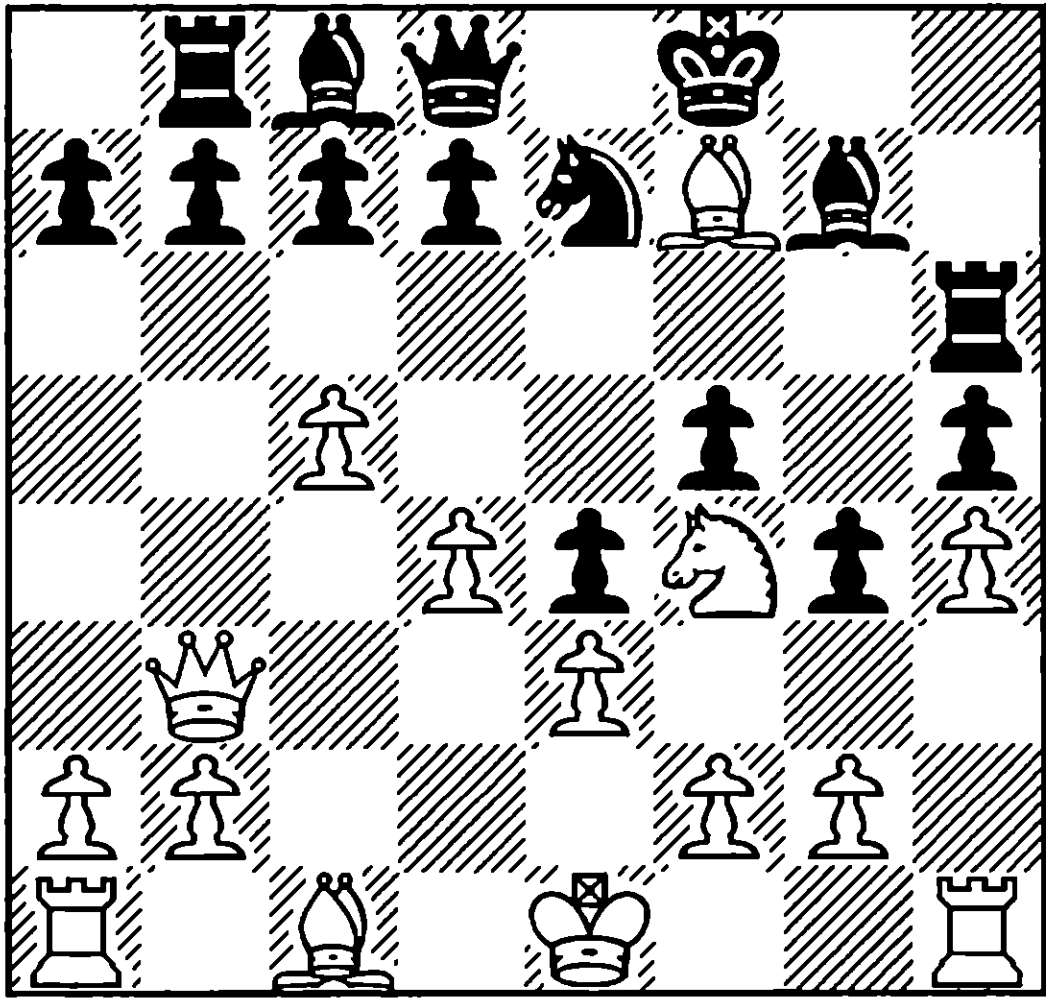
15 c5!

Preventing the intended 15...♘g6 due to 16 ♔g8+ and wins.

15...♔f8 16 ♔c4 ♔b8

Perhaps he just got lucky but a couple of years later White had this position again in the game C.McNab E.Spencer, Hawick 2006. This time his opponent tried 16...♘g6, allowing McNab to show what he had intended: 17 ♔g8! (here the big threat is mate on f7) 17...♘h8 (this pitiful retreat is forced, since queen moves such as 17...♔e7? run into 18 ♘d5! and 19 ♘xc7) 18 ♔d2 with the much better position for White. It is certainly a good advert for the virtues of playing the same opening and consequently benefiting from having prior knowledge of the plans involved.

17 ♔f7!



A nice way to pick up a pawn and maintain the pressure on the king.

17...b6 18 ♔xh5 ♔f6

Once again Black has to guard against the threat of mate, which is an indication that his opening has turned out to be a disaster.

19 f3

The classic way to break down the pawn chain, and in this case it helps open lines to allow an attack to prosper.

19...exf3 20 gxf3 ♖b7 21 c6! ♘xc6

21...♙xc6 22 d5 ♖b7 23 fxg4 is also good for White.

22 ♙d2?!

Now White catches up on development, but he should really be making sure victory is within sight. 22 ♘g6+! is an improvement which forces Black to give up material. For instance: 22...♖xg6 23 ♙xg6 ♔e7 24 ♙h7 winning.

22...♘a5?

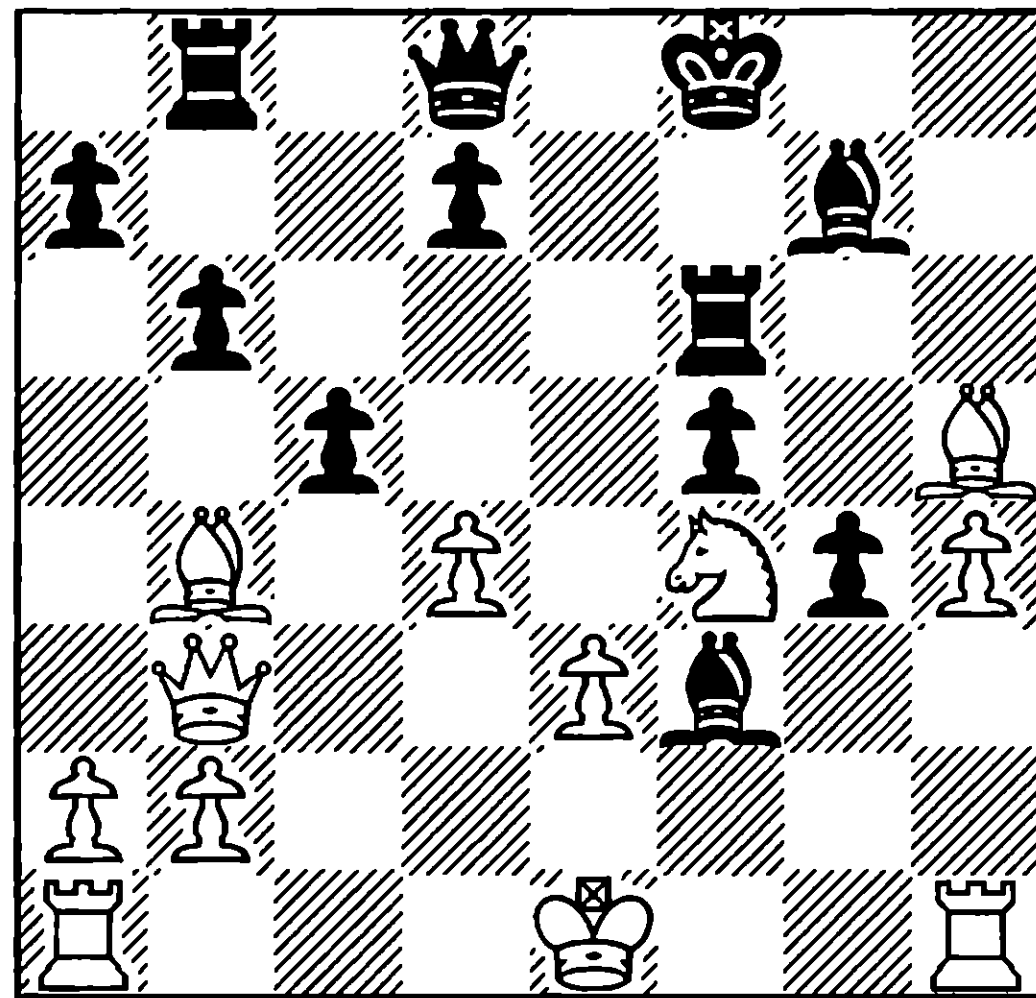
Instead 22...♙h6! provides an escape square on g7 for the king, when there is still hope of survival.

23 ♙xa5 ♙xf3

23...bxa5 is met by 24 ♘g6+ ♖xg6 (or 24...♔e8? 25 ♔g8+ ♙f8 26 ♘xf8+ winning easily) 25 ♙xg6 and White has a clear advantage.

24 ♙b4+! c5

The threat to the rook on h1 can be safely ignored because White has a forcing combination which is very strong.



25 dxc5! ♙xh1?

Losing at once, but 25...bxc5 26 ♙xc5+ d6 27 ♘e6+ ♔e7 28 ♘xd8 ♖xb3 29 axb3 dxc5 30 ♖xa7+ ♔xd8 31 ♖h2 leaves White the exchange and a pawn ahead with a winning endgame.

26 c6+ d6 27 0-0-0 ♔c7 28 ♖xd6 1-0

Since 28...♖xd6 29 ♙xd6+ ♔xd6 30 ♔f7 is mate.

“Chess is work.” – Walter Browne.

Chapter Four

Secrets of Success

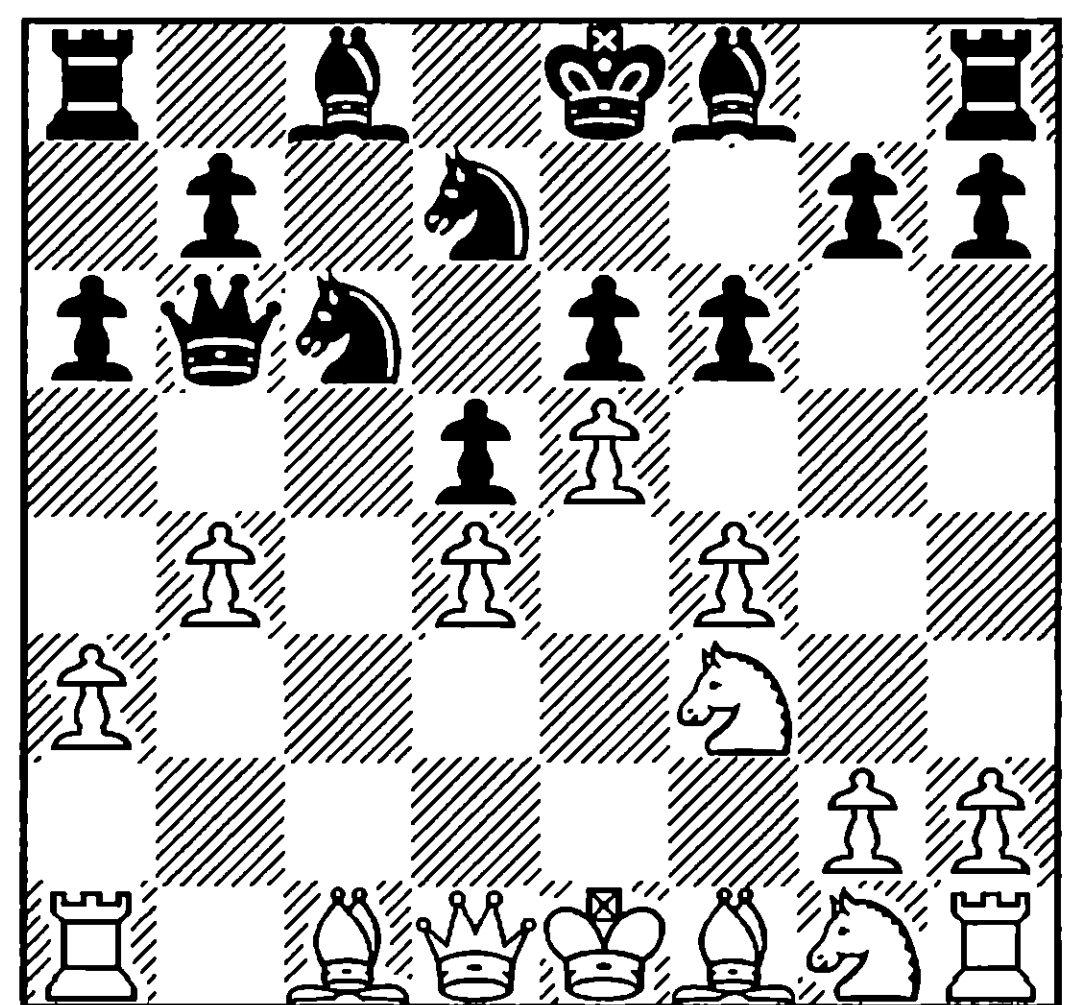
"I don't believe in psychology, I believe in good moves." – Bobby Fischer in the *New York Times*, 1972.

G.Lane-R.Eccles
Touckley 2007

Predict-a-move

I think it is fundamental when you have the advantage that you go on the attack. However, this happy state of affairs will not always be true, so there will be a need to be smart and tricky to extract an advantage from even an equal-looking position. In my experience one way to lure an opponent to their doom is *predict-a-move*. The standard idea is that you spot what your opponent is planning and then find a move that hides a trap should he carry on as intended. In other words you mask your true intentions while still playing a reasonable move to avoid suspicion.

This seems an obvious method of winning to experienced players, but it can be quite a revelation to others. Here is the idea of predict-a-move in action:



White to play

This is the easiest example I could think of that demonstrates Black walking into a trap. In a French Defence Black has applied the usual pressure against the d4-pawn with ...♘c6 and ...♙b6, so I am happy to make things easier for him.

11 ♖d3

A perfectly reasonable move, pre-

paring $\text{c}2$ and setting up a trap if Black wants to grab the d pawn.

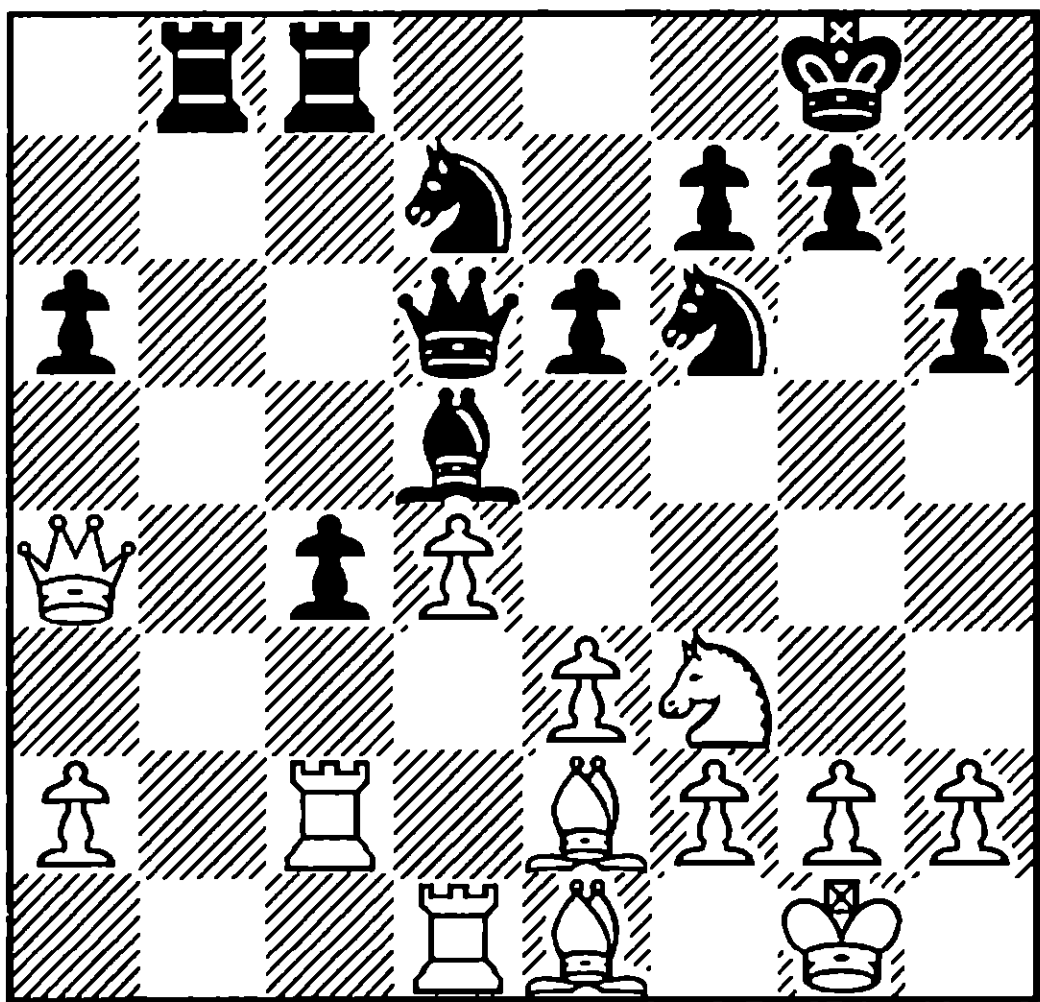
$11... \text{c} \times \text{d}4?$ $12 \text{ c} \times \text{d}4 \text{ W} \times \text{d}4??$

Still happily counting the pawns.

$13 \text{ Q} \times \text{g}6+ 1-0$

The next game shows that even the top American players can be lulled into a false sense of security when coming up against *predict-a-move*:

J.Kraai-A.Stripunsky
US Championship,
St Louis 2010



Black to play

It is clear that White intends to take on c4, so the position is ripe for *predict-a-move* by setting up a trap while also playing a constructive move:

$21... \text{R} \times \text{b}5$

Black makes little attempt to hang on to the pawn since the obvious $21... \text{N} \times \text{b}6$ allows $22 \text{ W} \times \text{a}6$.

$22 \text{ Q} \times \text{c}4?$

White walks into the trick, whereas a more considered approach might have found $22 \text{ R} \times \text{d}c1$, followed by $\text{Q} \times \text{a}5$, before taking on c4 with equal chances. This is the beauty of *predict-a-move* – it can tip the scales in your favour when a draw is the more likely result.

$22... \text{R} \times \text{c}4! 23 \text{ R} \times \text{c}4 \text{ N} \times \text{b}6$

The point of Stripunsky’s crafty play is that he emerges with two pieces for a rook and a winning position.

$24 \text{ W} \times \text{b}5?!$

After $24 \text{ W} \times \text{a}6 \text{ Q} \times \text{c}4$ there is no hint of counterplay by White who will suffer in the long term. Sensing that all is lost White pins his hopes on the queen sacrifice with vague ambitions to advance the passed a-pawn. The game concluded:

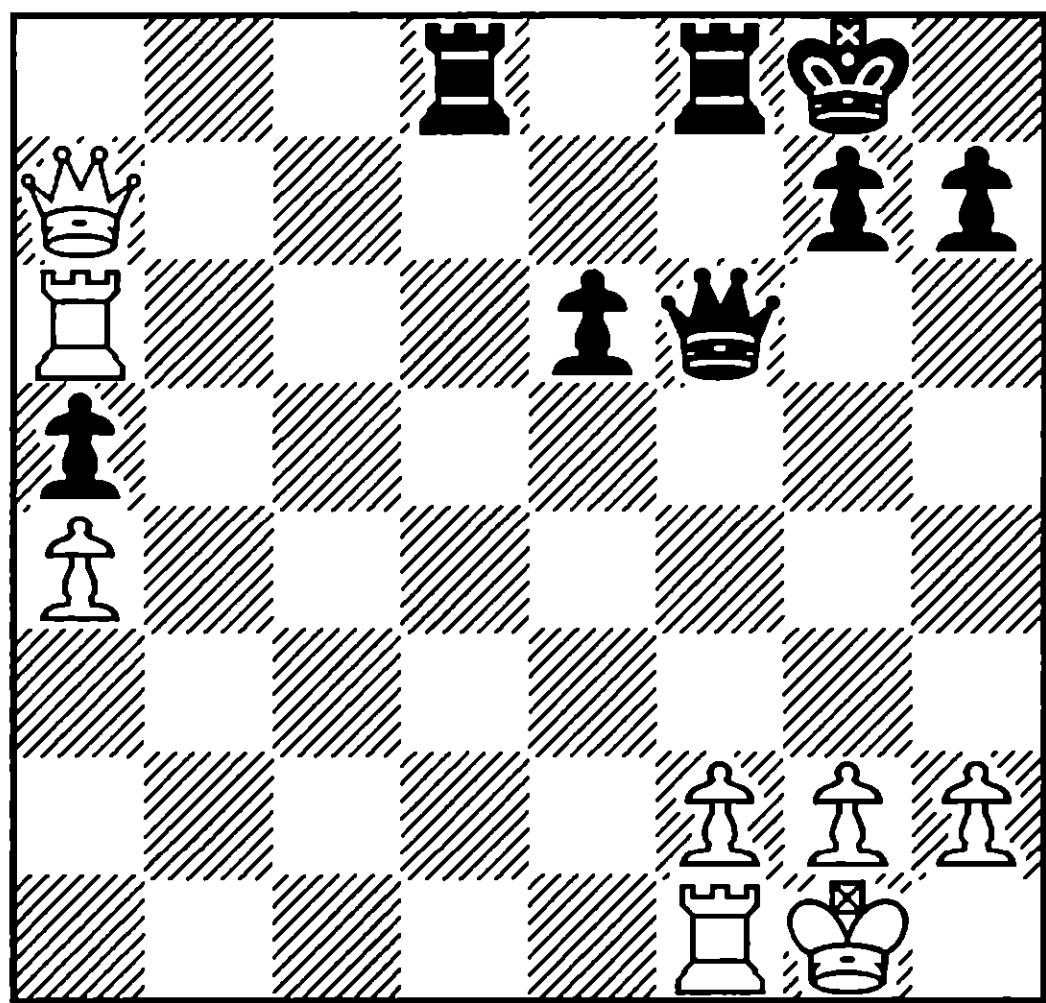
$24... \text{a} \times \text{b}5 25 \text{ R} \times \text{c}5 \text{ N} \times \text{g}4 26 \text{ R} \times \text{b}5 \text{ N} \times \text{d}7 27 \text{ a}4 \text{ Q} \times \text{f}3 28 \text{ g} \times \text{f}3 \text{ W} \times \text{h}2+ 29 \text{ K} \times \text{f}1 \text{ W} \times \text{h}3+ 30 \text{ K} \times \text{e}2 \text{ N} \times \text{h}2 31 \text{ Q} \times \text{b}4 \text{ W} \times \text{f}3+ 32 \text{ K} \times \text{e}1 \text{ N} \times \text{f}6 0-1$

In the next game many players would agree a draw, but Black proves that luck is on your side if you prepare to attack:

R.Pruijssers-F.Kroeze
Dutch Team
Championship 2008

White has just played $\text{R} \times \text{c}6-\text{a}6$, making it abundantly clear that he is about to take the a-pawn. Just that information is sufficient for an experienced player to set in motion the process of

predict-a-move. Basically, knowing White's next move almost for sure should allow you to try and think up something special. I have to admit it does look like a draw, but look again.



Black to play

24...♖d4!

A classic move to hide your true intentions, because attacking the a-pawn looks like a perfectly normal continuation. The subtle change to the position is that the rook now blocks the white queen's protection of the f2-pawn.

25 ♖xa5?

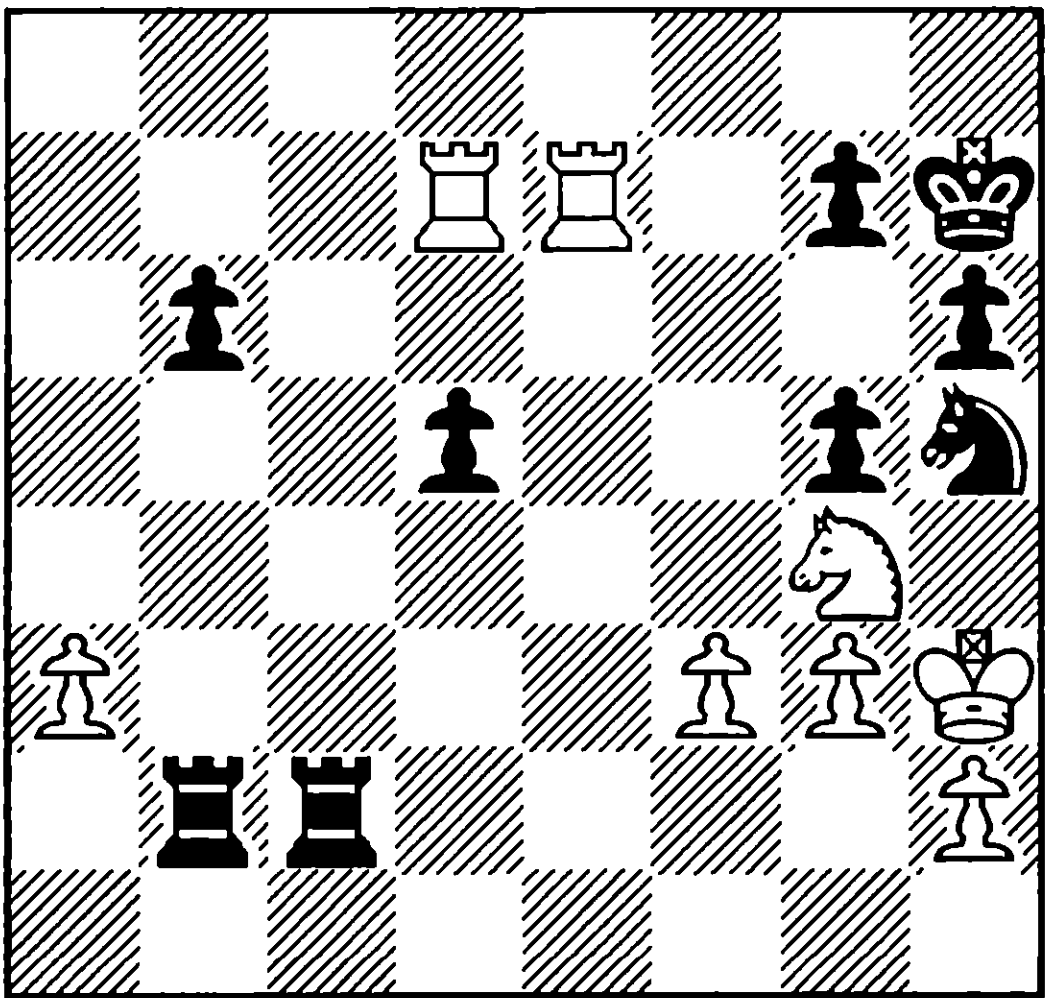
There seems nothing to fear so White carries on with his intended plan. If he had been on high-alert he would have found 25 h3, and after 25...♖xa4 26 ♖xa5 a draw will soon be agreed.

25...♔xf2+! 0-1

Bravo! White is humiliated upon 26 ♖xf2 ♔d1+ 27 ♖f1 ♔dxf1 mate.

The ending is also a perfect place to disguise your true intentions:

P.Cramling-S.Brynell
Stockholm 2010



Black to play

White has done a lot of work to try and revive her position by activating her pieces, in particular by getting her rooks to the seventh rank.

33...♖c3

Black sets up the chance by playing a reasonable move which attacks the a- and f-pawns. White needs to protect f3, as otherwise the massive threat after 34...♖xf3 would be 35...♘f4 mate.

34 ♖f7?

This is the obvious move to look after the f-pawn but it is also rather predictable. Instead, 34 ♘e5?! is met by 34...♖e2!, when 35 ♖xd5 fails to 35...♘f6 36 ♖d6 g4+! 37 fxg4 ♖cc2 and wins. Perhaps the passive-looking 34 ♘e3 is best, although 34...♖xa3 leaves Black on top.

34...♘f4+! 0-1

White is in no mood to give up the

exchange for a hopelessly lost ending, while 35 gxf4 allows 35...Jxf3 mate.

The Biggest Loser

The next game looks like a formality on paper: Black is an Indian grandmaster rated 2682, and expensively hired to give his team a turbo boost on top board; whereas White is merely a decent player rated 2284. Most onlookers assumed it was just a matter of *when* he would be overpowered, even with the white pieces.

The big difference in the outcome? Yes, *predict-a-move* came to the rescue by hiding White's intentions, enabling him to engineer a delightful tactic:

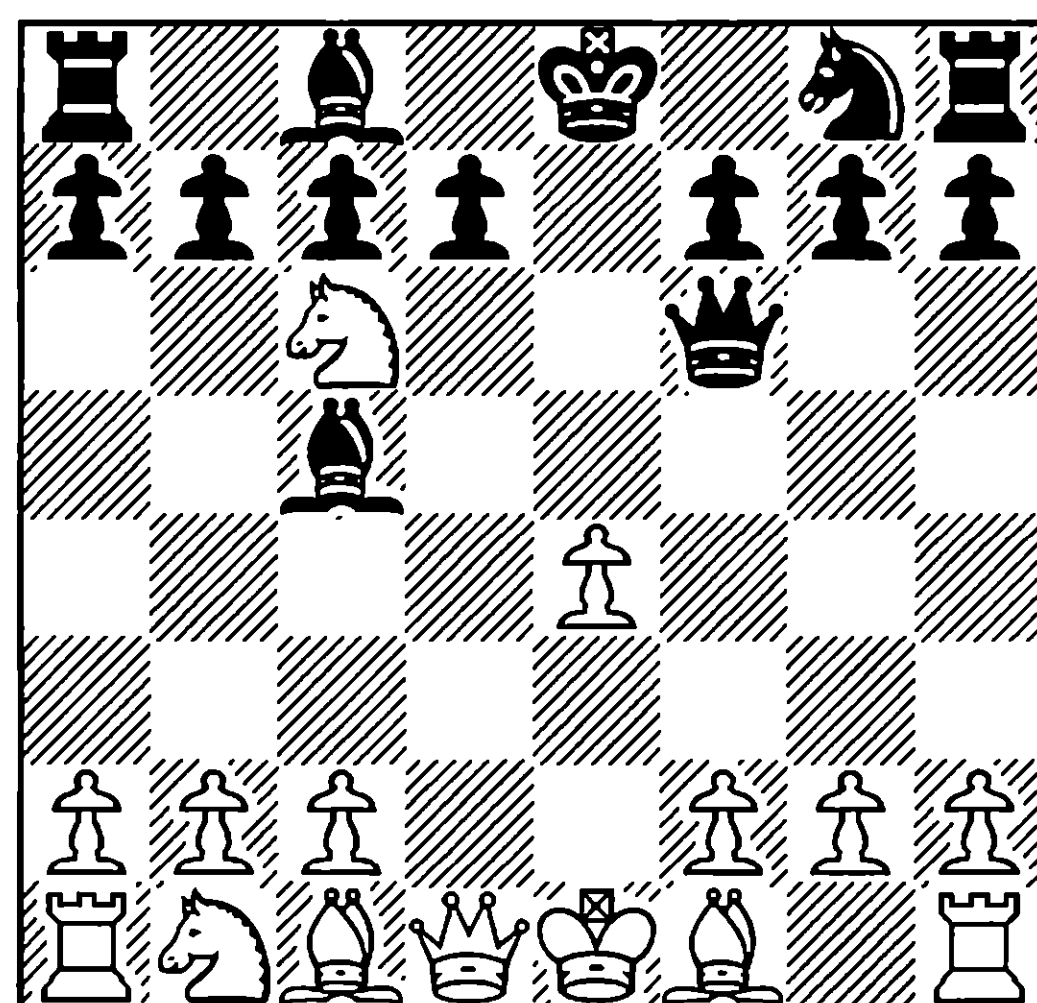
Game 27 J.Valmana Canto- P.Harikrishna Spanish Team Championship 2006 Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘xd4

The Scotch derived its name from a correspondence game between Edinburgh and London chess clubs, dating from 1826 to 1828. The popularity of the opening has fluctuated wildly over the last century or so. The Scotch Four Knights was quite popular in the early 20th century, but eventually developed a drawish reputation and attention turned to other openings, principally the Ruy Lopez. The current wave of

popularity can be traced back to sensational 14th and 16th games of the Kasparov-Karpov 1990 World Championship match in Lyons. The fascinating complications of those games and the romantic nature of the Scotch Opening captured the public's imagination.

4...♙c5 5 ♘xc6 ♙f6



The line with 4...♙c5 is known as the Classical Variation, in which 5 ♘xc6 is the Kasparov Variation. Here Black's queen move is just a ploy to allow him to capture on c6 with the d-pawn and avoid the exchange of queens. Only the most hopeful player will dream of checkmate on f2.

6 ♙f3

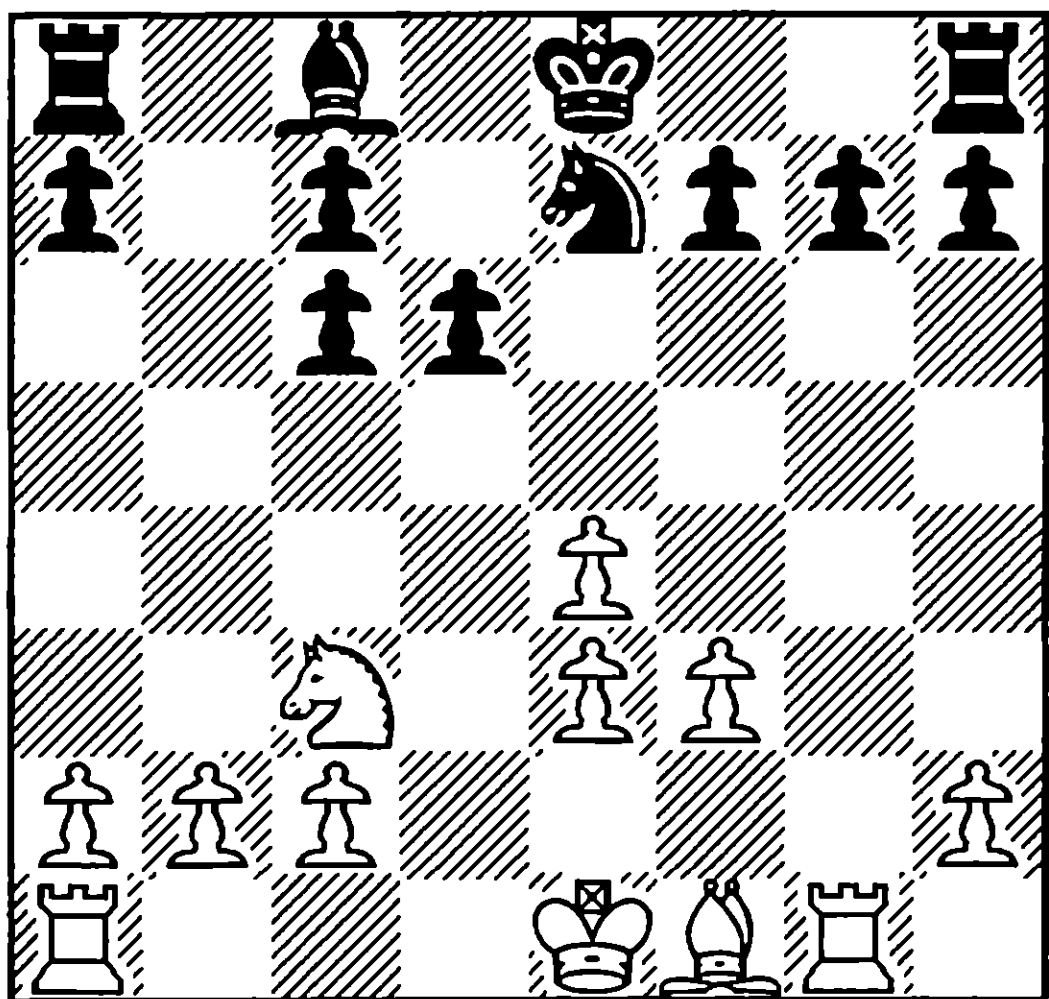
The invitation to exchange queens is a perfectly acceptable way to handle the position. The lower-rated player with White will harbour thoughts of a draw, while Black assumes he will eventually be able to grind his opponent down in the long term. If White wishes to avoid the queen swap then 6 ♙d2 should be preferred, which has Kasparov's seal of approval, after which

a typical set-up involves fxc3 , fcd3 and perhaps kingside castling.

6...♔xf3 7 gxf3 bxc6 8 ♖e3

White is happy to exchange Black's only active piece and make sure the fight for an advantage will be held in the middlegame.

8...♗xe3 9 fxe3 ♞e7 10 ♞c3 d6 11 ♖g1



White's moves all seem fairly straightforward and should cause Black little harm with careful play. However, if Black wants more he has to try and fight back, which is when things become interesting.

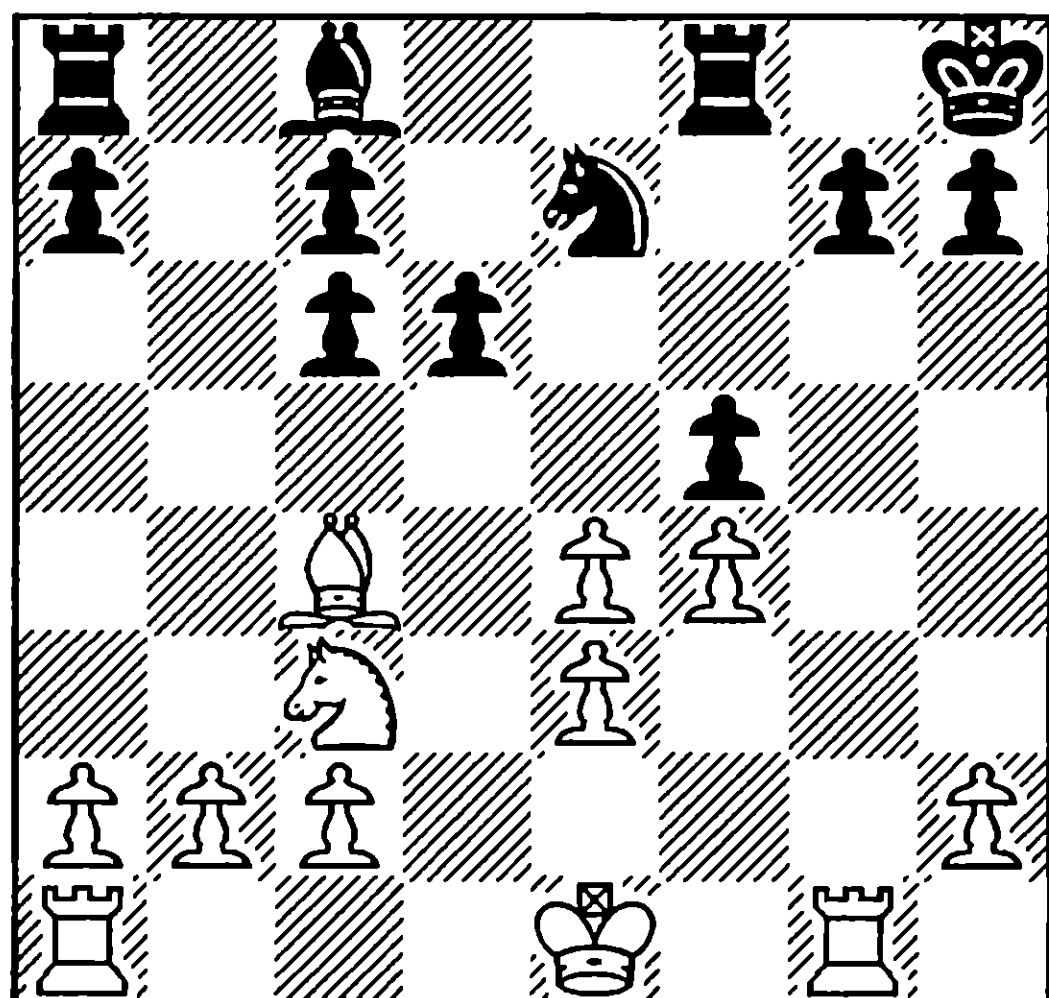
11...0-0

In the game A.Muzychuk-L.Galojan, European Women's Championship, Rijeka 2010, Black tested 11...g6, after which White used her extra room to manoeuvre to seek further concessions: 12 0-0-0 ♗e6 13 h4 f6 (13...h5, to block White's h-pawn, can be met by 14 ♞e2 aiming for f4 and a possible exchange on e6 when the timing is right) 14 f4 ♔f7 15 ♗e2 ♖hg8 16 ♗f3 ♖ab8 17 ♖d4 ♖b6 18 ♖a4 ♖a8 19 ♖a5 intending h4-h5 with the initiative.

12 f4 f5

White is making small but steady progress in improving his position, so Black rightly challenges his authority. The f-pawn is advanced to stop White thinking about f4-f5 to restrict the light-squared bishop on c8, and also to prepare to exchange on e4 and then catch up on development.

13 ♗c4+ ♔h8



14 e5!

A clever way to spice up the position. White offers a pawn in return for making his opponent's life difficult, and to keep the c8-bishop from finding a decent square after all. The added bonus is that 14...d5 would fully justify his decision, since White would be presented with a very valuable passed pawn.

14...dxe5 15 0-0-0

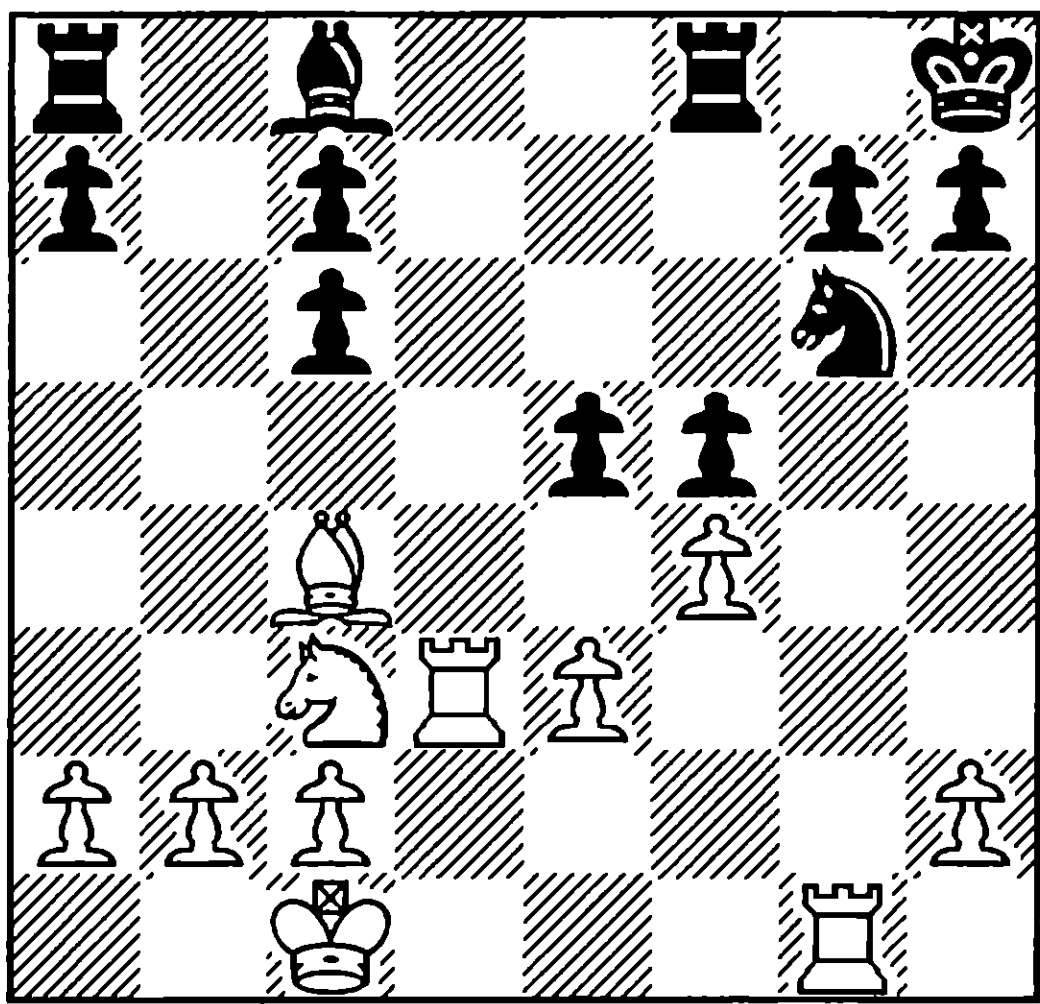
Naturally not 15 fxe5? ♞g6 16 e6 ♞e5!, when the threats at c4 and f3 mean that Black wins the pawn in far more favourable circumstances. Now, on the other hand, Black has problems completing his development, since if

he moves the bishop to b7 to coordinate his rooks, then White can swoop down with his own rook and take up residence on d7.

15...♘g6

Black attacks the f-pawn again. If instead 15...exf4 16 exf4 ♖b8 (but not 16...♘g6? 17 ♖xg6 hxg6 18 ♖d3 with an echo of the main game), then 17 ♖de1 ♗g8 18 ♖e5 leaves White with the advantage.

16 ♖d3!



The ultimate *predict-a-move*: an incredibly subtle trick, giving his grand-master opponent ample opportunity to go wrong. It is clear that Black wants to take on f4 and may have reasoned that his lower-rated opponent has acquiesced to the inevitable, allowing him to take control of the position. Certainly, White seems to have minimal compensation after 16...exf4 17 exf4 ♗xg6 18 ♖f3 ♗h5 – at least that is what the star player thought to his cost.

16...exf4?

The Indian Olympiad player allows himself to be tricked in spectacular

fashion. This game has inspired others to follow, and even if Black does not always lose a piece, the ending still presents problems:

a) 16...a5 17 ♘e2 ♖e8 (the immediate 17...♗a6 18 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 19 ♖d7 is good for White) 18 ♗f7! ♗a6 19 ♗xe8 ♖xe8? (Black should really try 19...♗xd3, although 20 ♗xc6 ♖a6 21 ♖d1 ♖xc6 22 ♖xd3 ♗g8 23 ♖d8+ ♗f7 24 ♖d5 still gives White an edge) 20 ♖d2 ♗xe2 21 ♖xe2 exf4 22 ♖f1 and White had a clear advantage in S.Haslinger-R.Berzinsh, British League 2007.

b) 16...e4 17 ♖d2 gives White a steady position with lots of room for improvement, such as by ♖dg1 and ♗a4-c5, designed to hound the black bishop. I was watching this game (D.Smerdon-T.Rej, Gold Coast 2009) being played and saw how difficult it is for Black to find something active to do. In fact here, when he should be contemplating something quiet like 17...a5, Black quickly ran out of patience and played 17...♗h4?! 18 ♖gd1 g6 (18...♗f3 19 ♖d8 ♗b7 20 ♖8d7 ♖ac8 21 ♗a4 also gives White excellent chances) 19 ♖d8! ♗g7 20 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 21 ♖d8+ ♗e7 22 ♖h8 h5 23 ♗a6 and White went on to win (if 23...♗d7, then 24 ♗a4 is very convincing).

17 ♖xg6!

The game should be all but over: this ingenious idea wins a piece, as 17...hxg6 is met by the simple 18 exf4 and Black is defenceless against the

stunning threat of ♖h3 mate. Yes, the top-class grandmaster missed it and he now pays a heavy price.

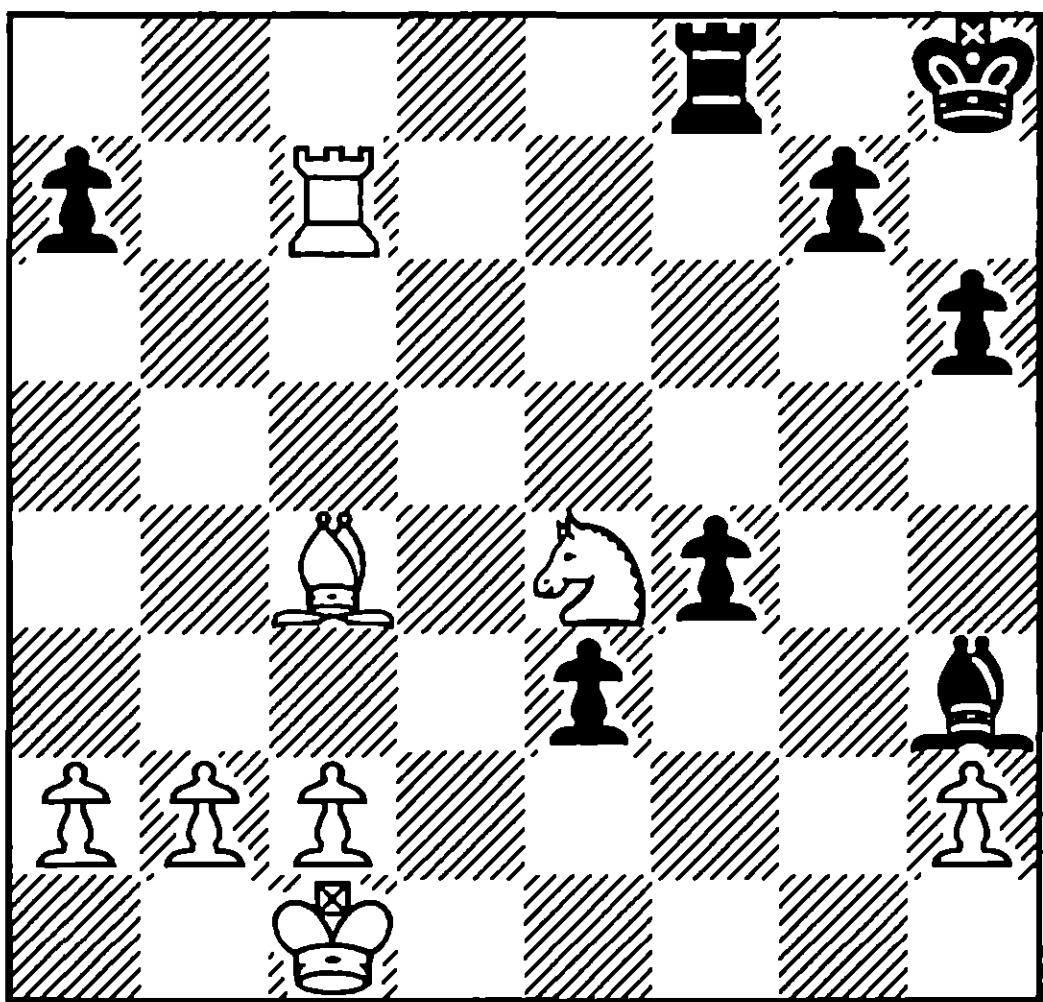
17...fxe3 18 ♖xc6 f4 19 ♖xc7 ♙h3

Black's position is very poor but it seems that Harikrishna comes from the school of thought that you never win a game by resigning.

20 ♖d4 ♖ae8

Or 20...f3 21 ♖e4 f2 22 ♘d1! f1♚+ 23 ♙xf1 ♖xf1 (23...♙xf1 24 ♘xe3 is no better) 24 ♖xa7! ♖af8 (not 24...♖xa7?? 25 ♖e8 mate) 25 ♖xe3 and White should win by quickly advancing his queenside pawns.

21 ♖e4 ♖xe4 22 ♘xe4 h6



23 ♖f7?!

Trading rooks makes the opposing pawn mass more dangerous. White could have safely captured 23 ♖xa7, when again after 23...♖e8 (or 23...f3 24 ♖e7 f2 25 ♘g3 f1♚+ 26 ♙xf1 ♙xf1 27 ♖xe3) 24 ♖f7 ♙g2 (not 24...♖xe4? 25 ♖f8+ ♙h7 26 ♙d3) 25 ♘c5 e2 26 ♙xe2 ♖xe2 27 ♖xf4, he should win with his queenside pawns.

23...♖xf7 24 ♙xf7 g5

After the immediate 24...f3 25 ♙h5 f2 26 ♘g3 f1♚+ 27 ♘xf1 ♙xf1 28 ♙d1, followed by 29 ♙e1, White will pick up the e-pawn to reach a winning bishop endgame, although Black has hopes of survival.

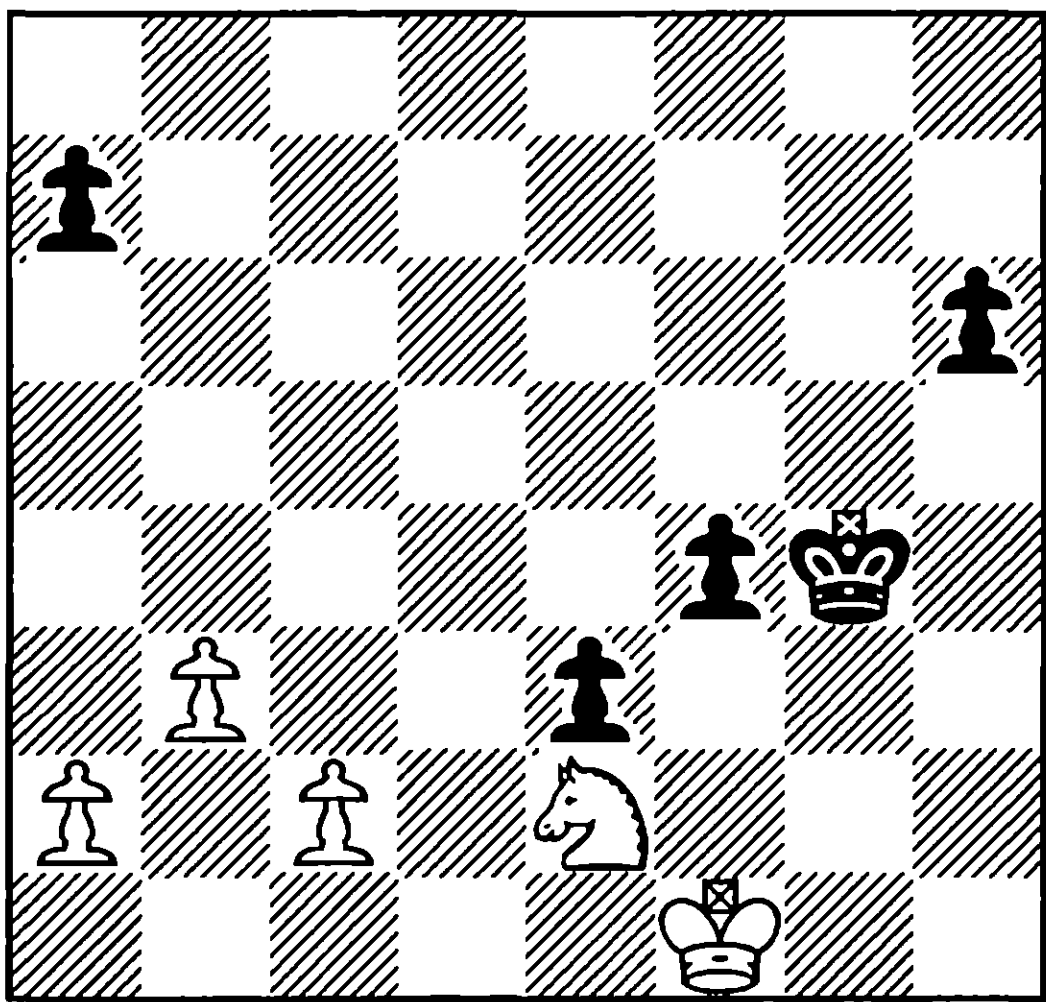
25 ♙h5

It requires some work, but White is still heavily the favourite. First, he needs to restrict Black's chances of advancing the kingside pawns before pushing his own passed c-pawn.

25...♙g7 26 ♙d1 ♙e6 27 b3 g4 28 ♙e2 ♙d5 29 ♘c3 ♙f3+ 30 ♙f1?

An error; the white king should advance with 30 ♙d3, so that after 30...♙f6 31 h3! (a nice finesse) 31...♙g5 32 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 he can play 33 ♘e4+! ♙h4 34 hxg4 ♙xg4 35 ♙e2 and wins.

30...♙f6 31 h3 ♙g5 32 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 33 hxg4 ♙xg4 34 ♘e2?



And this should actually have lost. Instead, 34 ♙e2 leads to a draw after 34...h5 35 ♘b5! h4 36 ♘d4 h3 37 ♘f3 ♙g3 38 c4 h2 39 ♘xh2 ♙xh2 40 c5 ♙g3 41 c6 f3+ 42 ♙xe3 f2 43 c7 f1♚ 44 c8♚ ♙f2+ 45 ♙d3 ♙xa2.

14...f3??

The grandmaster finally gets his chance and – presumably in a time scramble – misses it! Here 34...h5! would have won for Black. For example, 35 c4 h4 36 c5 h3 37 c6 h2 38 ♔g2 f3+ 39 ♕xh2 fxe2 40 c7 e1♔ 41 c8♔+ ♔f3! and the remaining e-pawn cannot be stopped.

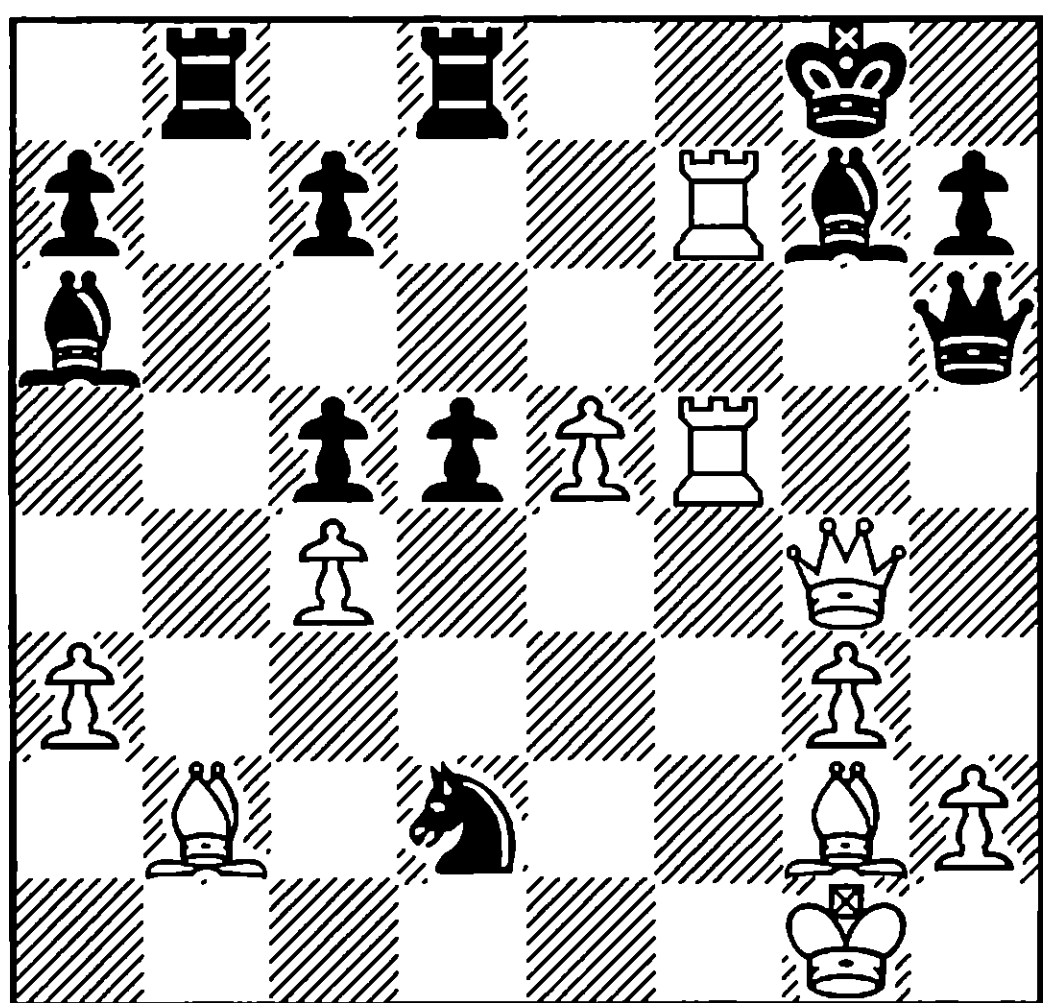
35 c4!

Back on track. White is now ahead in any pawn race, so the rest is easy.

35...a5 36 a3 f2 37 c5 ♔f5 38 ♘g3+ ♔f4 39 ♕g2 h5 40 ♘xh5+ ♔e4 41 ♘g3+ 1-0

The next game is a tougher example because, using predict-a-move, Black can see that his position is on the brink of defeat but, by noting the forcing nature of the combination, comes up with a dramatic conclusion:

D.Petrosian-N.Grandelius Sarajevo 2010



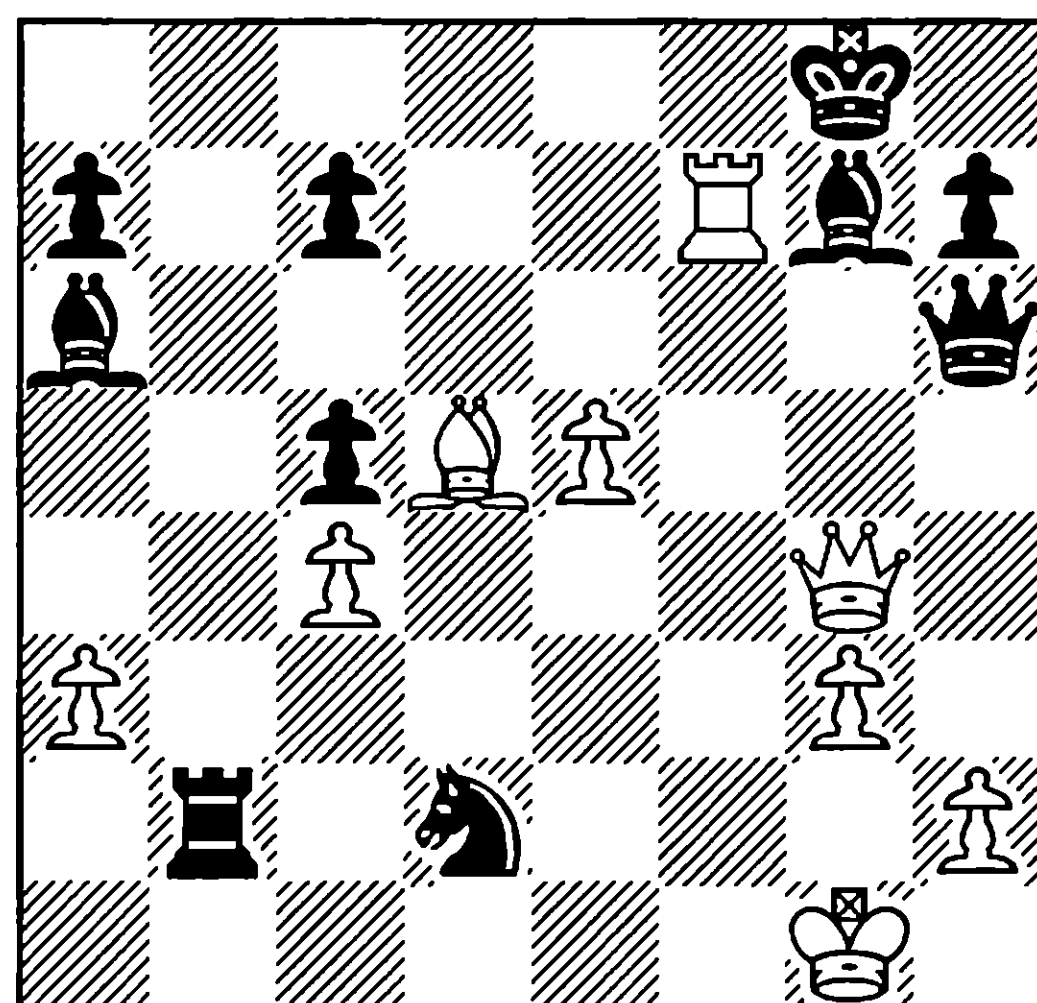
Black to play

White has just played 24 ♖e2 g4 inviting Black to dare take the bishop on b2. As White has just pinned the g7-bishop Black can take a good guess that the intended reception, if the queen's rook moves, will be ♖f8+ and ♗xd5+ with very dangerous play. But being able to predict the moves allows Black to figure out that White has merely trapped himself.

24...♖xb2! 25 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 26 ♗xd5+

Now if 26...♔h8??, then 27 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 28 ♔g8 is mate. But Black has seen further:

26...♖f7! 27 ♖xf7



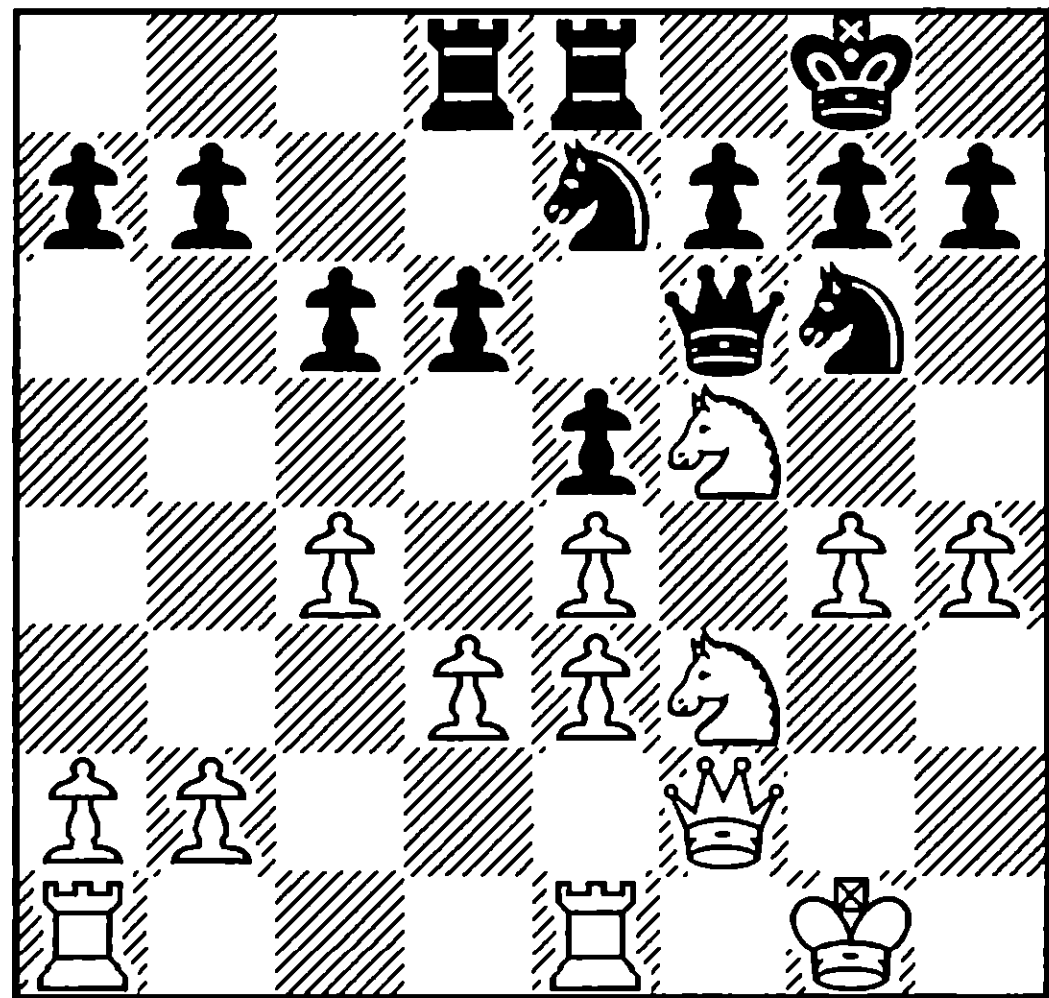
If 27 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 White has nothing.
27...♔xh2+! 0-1

White resigned rather than allow 28 ♔xh2 ♘f3+ followed by ...♖h2 mate.

“A bad plan is better than none at all.” – Frank Marshall.

The next example is similar to the theme, because I improve my position in the knowledge that the obvious defensive action in reply leads to defeat.

G.Lane-W.Pritchard
 Jersey 1982



White to play

22 ♖g5

I fully expected the reply to kick my knight away – and it duly occurred:

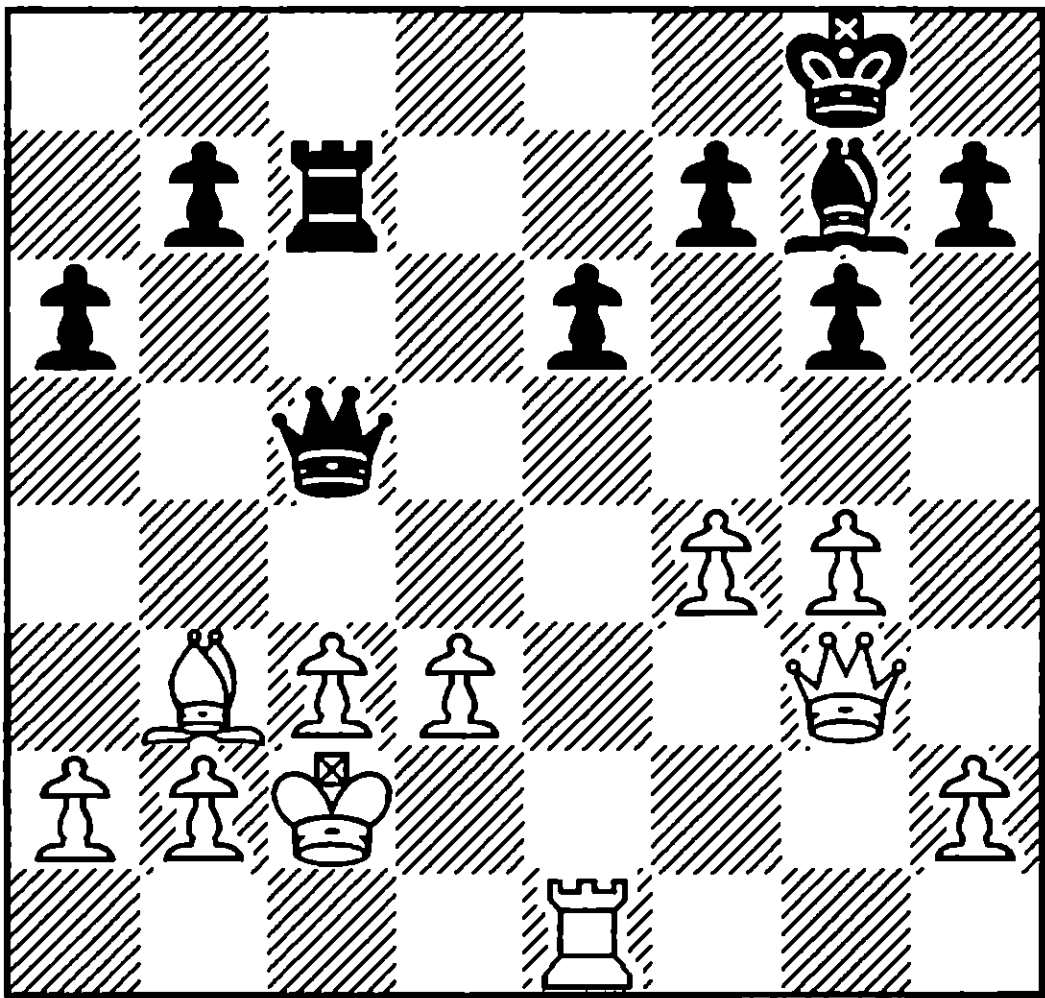
22...h6? 23 ♖xh6+! 1-0

Black has fallen for the trap and everything loses: 23...gxh6 24 ♔xf6 picks up the queen; 23...♔f8 24 ♖h7 is mate; and finally 23...♔h8 24 ♖hxf7+ ♔g8 25 ♖xd8 ♔xd8 26 ♔xf6 gxf6 27 ♖f3 leaves White the exchange and two pawns up; while 25 ♔g3!, threatening ♔f1 to trap the queen, may be even stronger.

G.Lane-D.Stojic
 Australian Championship,
 Parramatta 2008

In time trouble Black has just played 29...♔dc7 with the obvious intention to

take on c3 with the bishop. After careful consideration I decided it was a harmless gesture, but using *predict a move* improved my position while allowing him to carry on with the wrong plan. There followed:



White to play

30 f5 ♔xc3? 31 bxc3 ♔xc3+ 32 ♔b1 1-0
 Black has run out of checks.

Predict-a-move again

Finally, a game in which I made a conscious effort to mask my intentions by using *predict-a-move* to achieve success. I have added more opening analysis than usual in case anyone wants to replicate this obscure line as a surprise:

Game 28
M.Burrows-G.Lane
 British Championship,
 Torquay 2009
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 ♔b5 a6 4 ♔a4 ♖f6

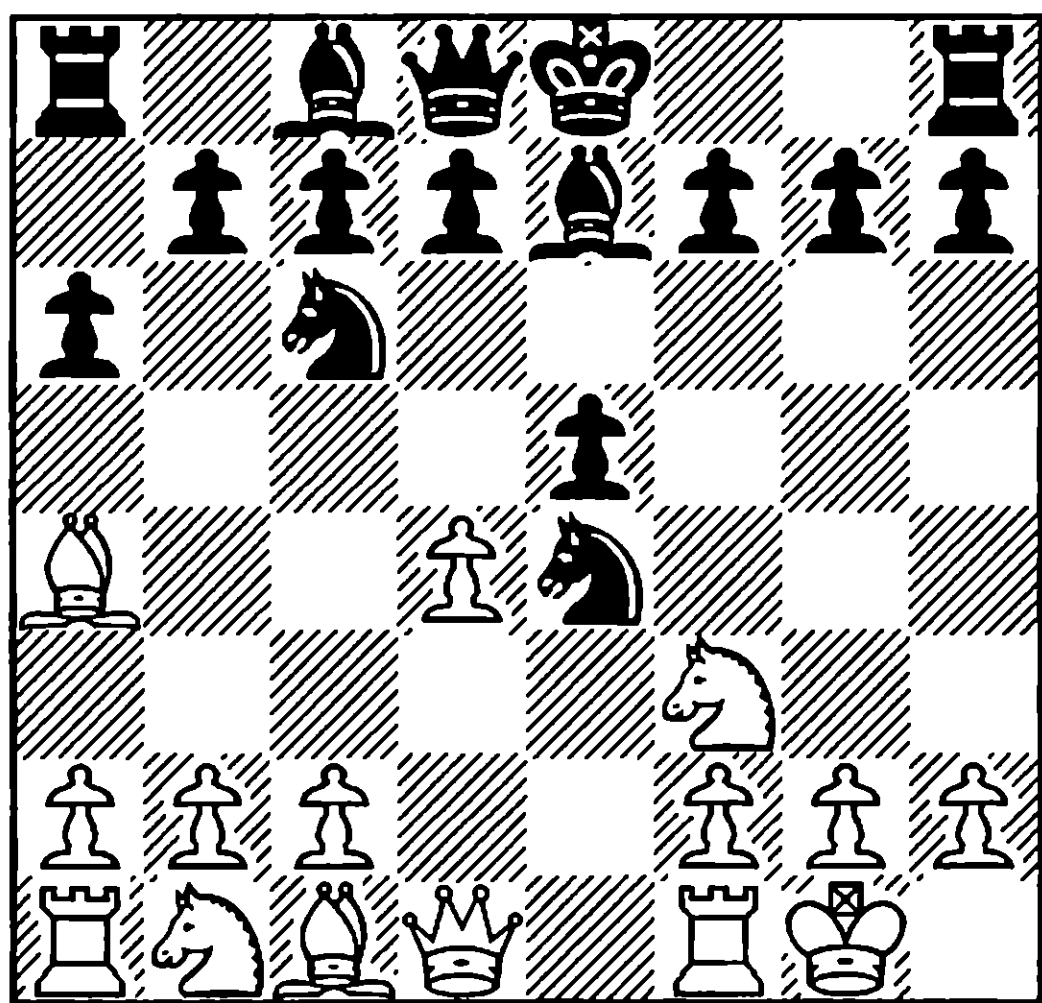
5 0-0 ♖xc4!?

This is known as the Open Ruy Lopez. It first became popular as long ago as 1873 when the first World Champion, Wilhelm Steinitz, played it a couple of times at the Vienna international tournament. Since then it had always remained a credible alternative to the main lines with 5...♗e7, being adopted by such stars as Anand, Euwe and, in particular, Korchnoi.

6 d4

This is the tried and tested response which, over time, has been deemed the best response. A player less familiar with the position tends to plump for 6 ♖e1 in order to regain the pawn at the earliest opportunity. For instance, 6...♘c5 (6...d5?! 7 ♗xc6+ bxc6 8 d3 ♘f6 9 ♘xe5 is just good for White, thanks to the dual threats of ♘xc6 and a discovered check when the knight moves) 7 ♗xc6 dxc6 8 ♘xe5 ♗e7 9 d4 ♘e6 10 c3 0-0 led to equal play in A.Iskos-M.Erdogdu, Thessaloniki 2010.

6...♗e7!?



An offbeat line designed to throw

my opponent's opening preparation into chaos since I rarely play it. 6...♗e7 is known as the Walbrodt Variation and is something I would recommend as a surprise weapon. Instead, 6...b5 7 ♗b3 d5 8 dxe5 ♗e6 is considered the main line.

7 ♖e1

Attacking the knight is the traditional way for White to seek an advantage from the opening. Also possible is 7 ♖e2 b5 and now:

a) 8 ♘xe5 ♘d6 9 ♘xc6 dxc6 10 ♗b3 0-0 11 ♗f4 with equal play, J.Van Mil-J.Piket, Dutch Championship, Eindhoven 1993.

b) 8 ♖xe4 is rightly met by 8...d5! and after 9 ♖e2 e4 10 ♘e5 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 bxa4 12 c4! c6 the position is about level.

c) 8 ♗b3 d5 9 dxe5 ♘a5!? (9...0-0 transposes to other lines after 10 ♖d1; the knight move leads to different positions because Black can soon swap off the bishop on b3) 10 h3 0-0 11 ♖d1 c6 12 c3 ♘xb3 13 axb3 f6 led to a level position in J.Polgar-J.Piket, Monte Carlo (rapid) 1993.

7...f5 8 dxe5

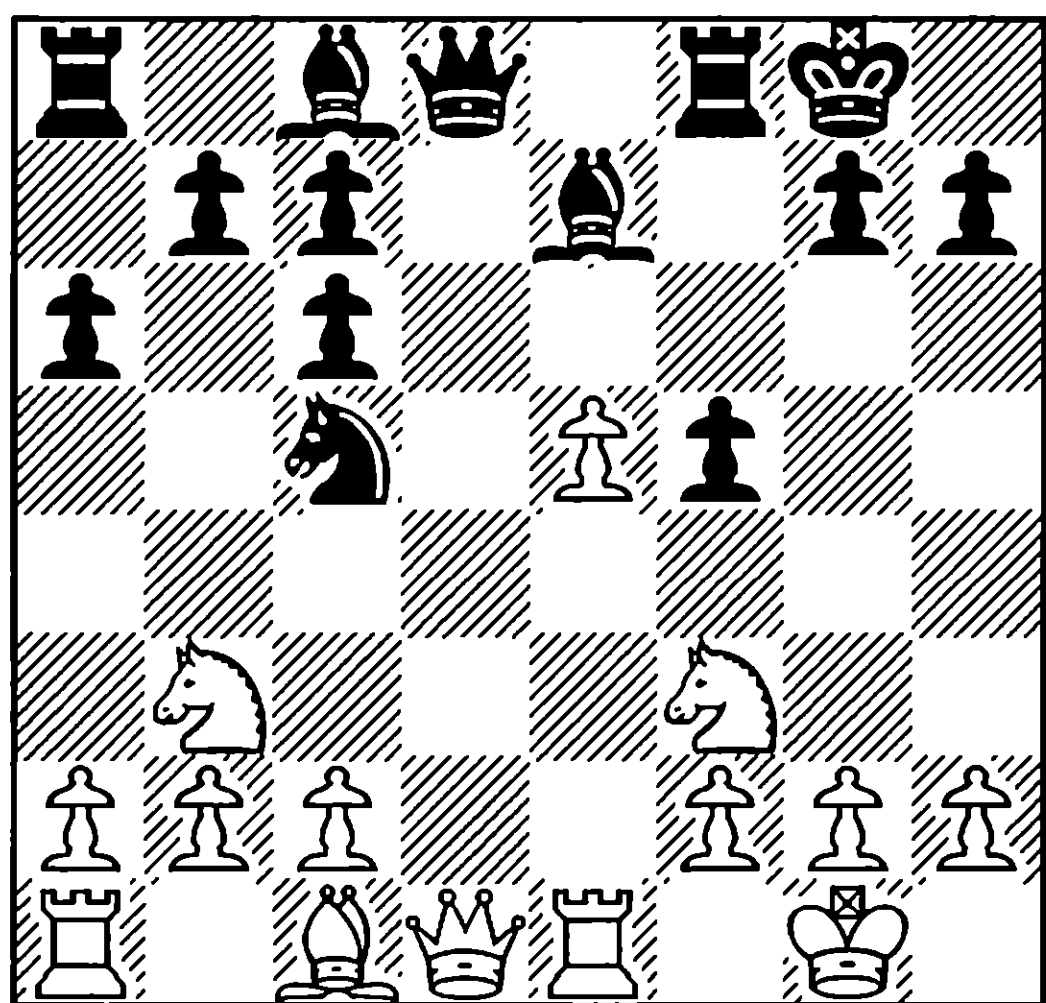
White decides to restore material equality. The alternative approach, 8 d5, should be met by 8...♘a5! 9 ♘xe5 0-0 and then:

a) 10 d6!? (a risky move because it takes the game into combination play where it is White who has to defend accurately) 10...♗xd6 11 ♖d5+ ♔h8 12 ♘f7+ (12 ♖xa5 b5! 13 ♘d3 bxa4 is

roughly equal) 12...♖xf7 13 ♜xf7 ♕xh2+ 14 ♔f1 b5 15 ♕b3 ♜xb3 (or 15...♕b7 16 ♜xf5 ♜h4 with a slight edge) 16 axb3 ♕b7 17 ♜h5?! ♕d6 18 ♞c3 ♜f6 and Black had the brighter attacking prospects in Popov-S.Zivanic, Belgrade 2000.

b) 10 ♞d2 ♕c5! 11 ♞xe4 fxe4 12 ♕e3 ♕xe3 13 ♖xe3 d6 14 b4 (not 14 ♞g4? when 14...b5 15 ♕b3 h5 snares the knight and White can resign) 14...♜f6 15 ♖xe4 ♜xf2+ 16 ♔h1 b5 17 ♞d3 ♜f5 18 ♖f4 ♜xd5 gave Black the edge in V.Rajlich-G.Lane, Budapest 2002.

8...0-0 9 ♞bd2 ♞c5 10 ♕xc6 dxc6 11 ♞b3



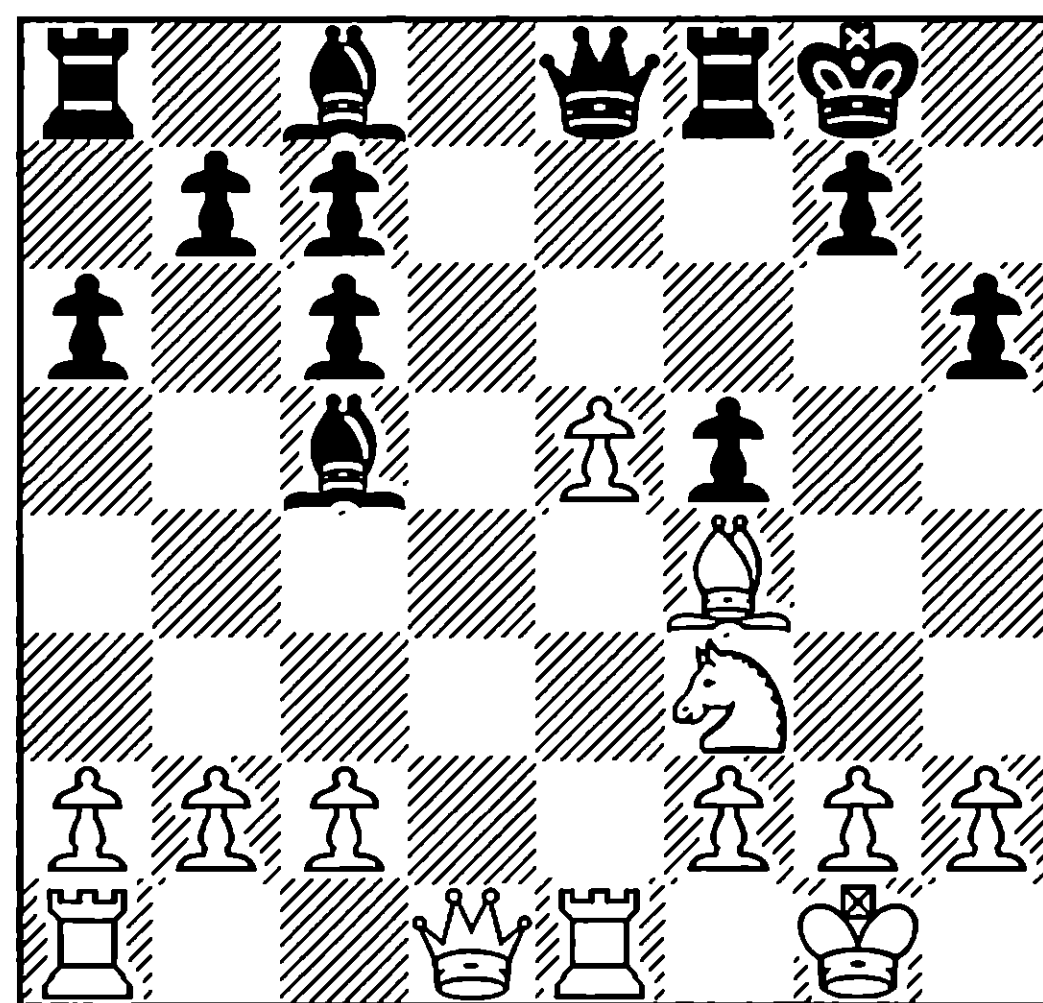
11...♕e8!?

There is nothing wrong with 11...♕xd1 which leads to a level ending, but I wanted more. I was aware that my opponent had already consumed a large amount of time on coping with the unusual opening and I wanted to test him further. I felt that by keeping the queens on the board there would be more chance to set up tactical obstacles, especially because he would

have less time to find the most precise plan in the middlegame.

12 ♞xc5 ♕xc5 13 ♕f4 h6

I was not sure when ...g7-g5 would be appropriate, but it does seem a bit annoying for White to have to deal with it at every opportunity. Therefore, in a way I was using predict-a-move in a positional sense and I expected his next move, even though it merely weakens his kingside pawn barrier.

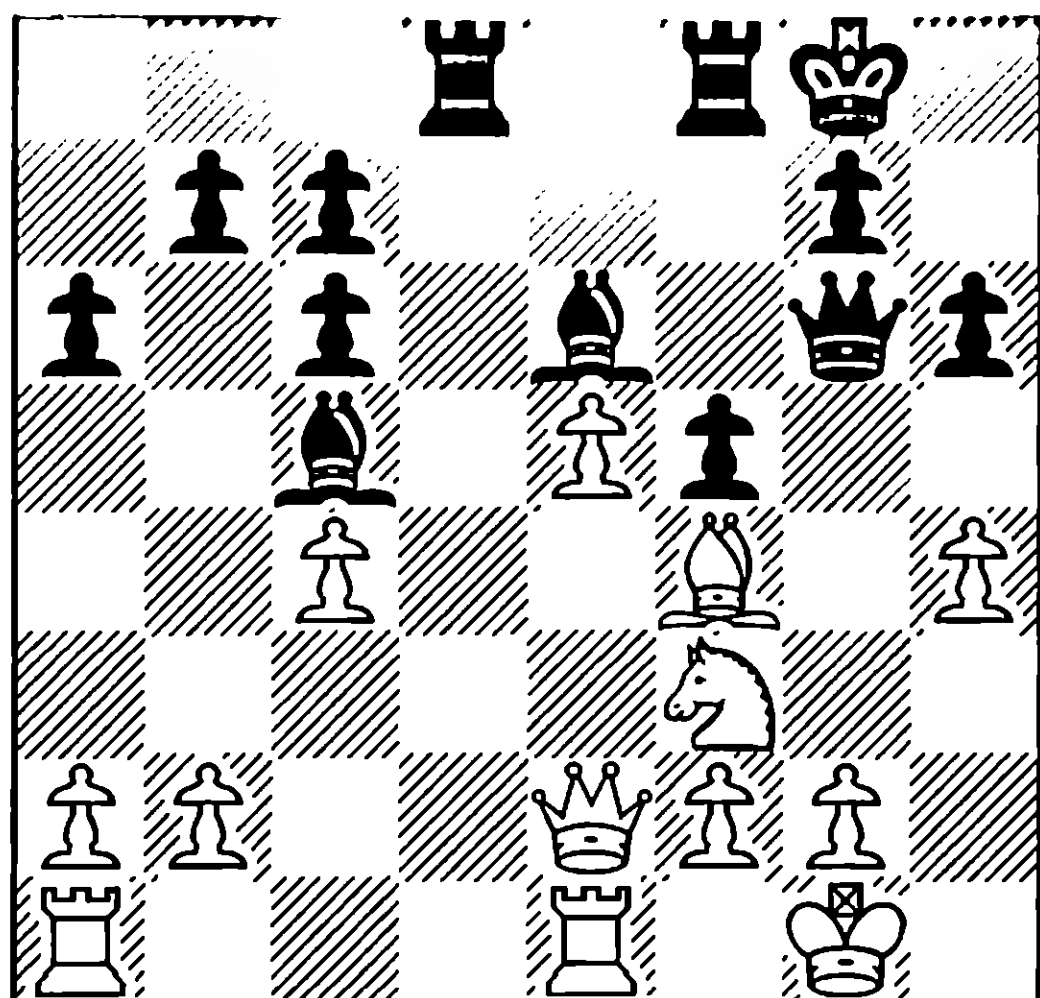


14 h4?!

This prevents me from safely playing ...g7-g5 but, at the same time, gives me a target in the form of the h4-pawn. As White I would prefer 14 ♜e2 to maintain the tension, since advancing pawns in front of my own king involves a certain amount of risk. I was intending to reply with 14...♕e6 when the chances are roughly equal.

14...♕e6 15 ♜e2 ♜g6

I wanted to connect my rooks and had already started wondering how I could make the most of the pawn being on h4, contemplating ...♜g4 at some point.



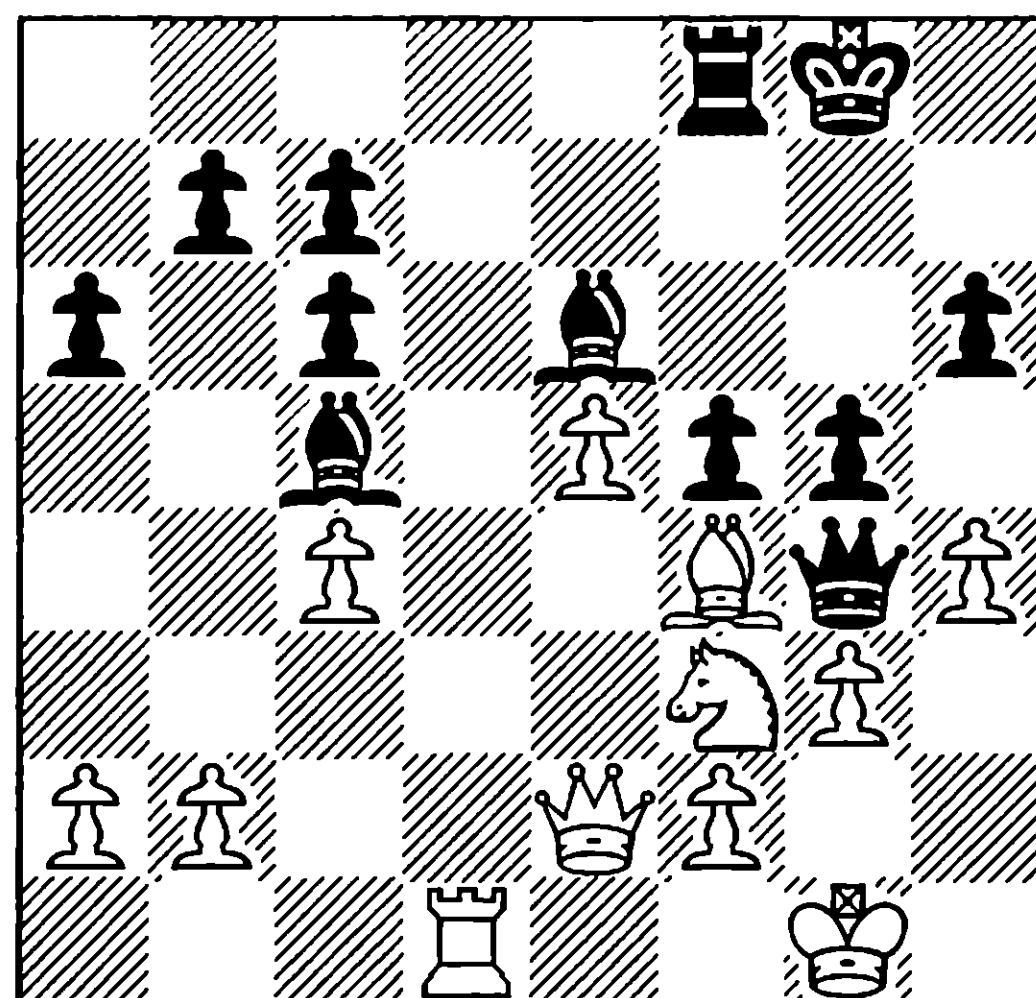
This decision was based on predict-a-move: it improves my position but, more importantly, the obvious reply for White is to counter with a rook on the d-file, which is exactly what I wanted. The thinking behind it came after I had a good look at the possibilities associated with 16...♔g4 and, although I saw one or two good ideas, they did not quite work. I then wondered how I could take the support of the rook on e1 away from defending the queen, because that would help my cause. That is when I hit upon the idea of using predict-a-move to mask my true intentions.

17 ♖ad1?! ♖xd1 18 ♖xd1 ♔g4!

This was what White missed. I attack the bishop which cannot move as then the c-pawn drops off the board, but attempts to defend it will plunge White into deeper trouble.

19 g3

Maybe it is best to admit that things have gone wrong by playing 19 ♔d2, though after 19...♙xc4 Black is a pawn up for nothing.

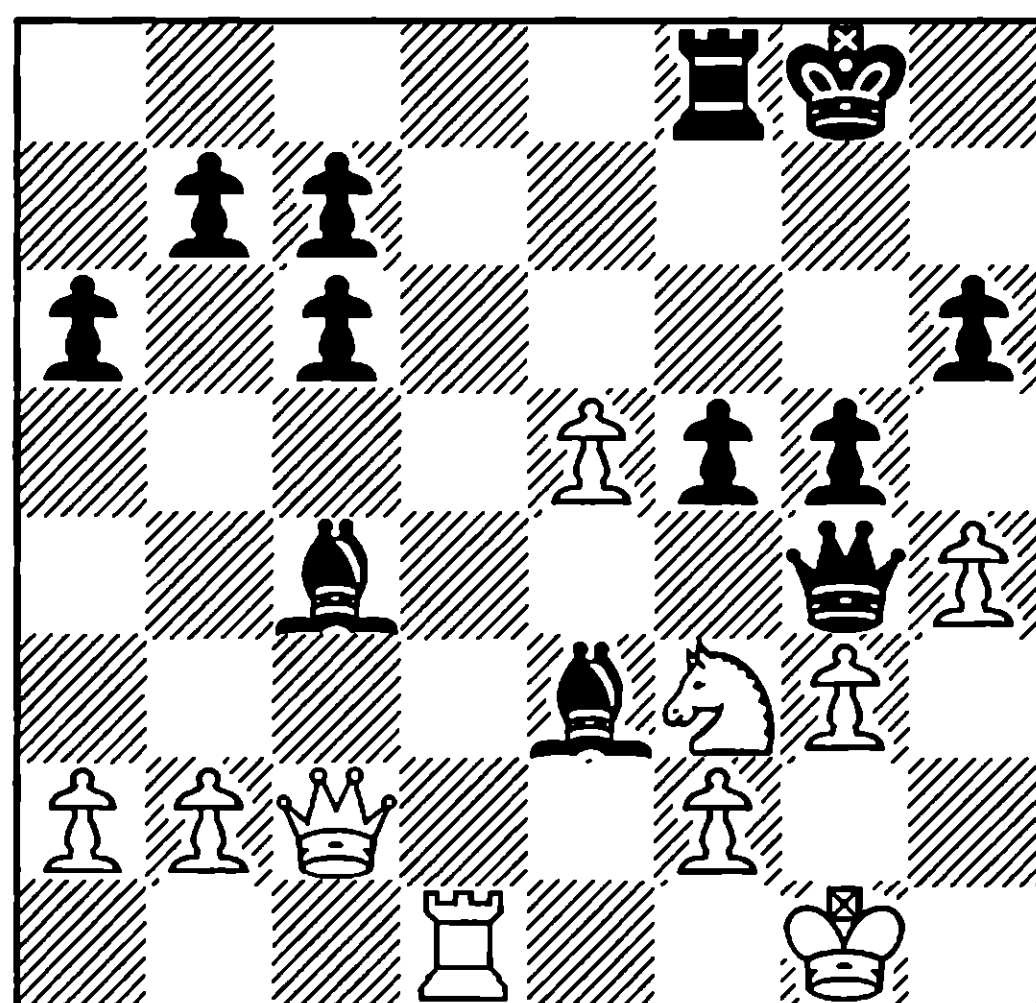


I could tell that my opponent had missed this aggressive reply which I had thought up when deciding on 16...♖ad8. The point is that White cannot play 20 hxg5 hxg5 21 ♞xg5 because the knight is pinned to his now unprotected queen.

20 ♙e3

Or 20 hxg5 hxg5 21 ♙xg5 ♙xc4 22 ♔c2 ♔xg3+ and wins.

20...♙xc4 21 ♔c2 ♙xe3



22 ♞h2?

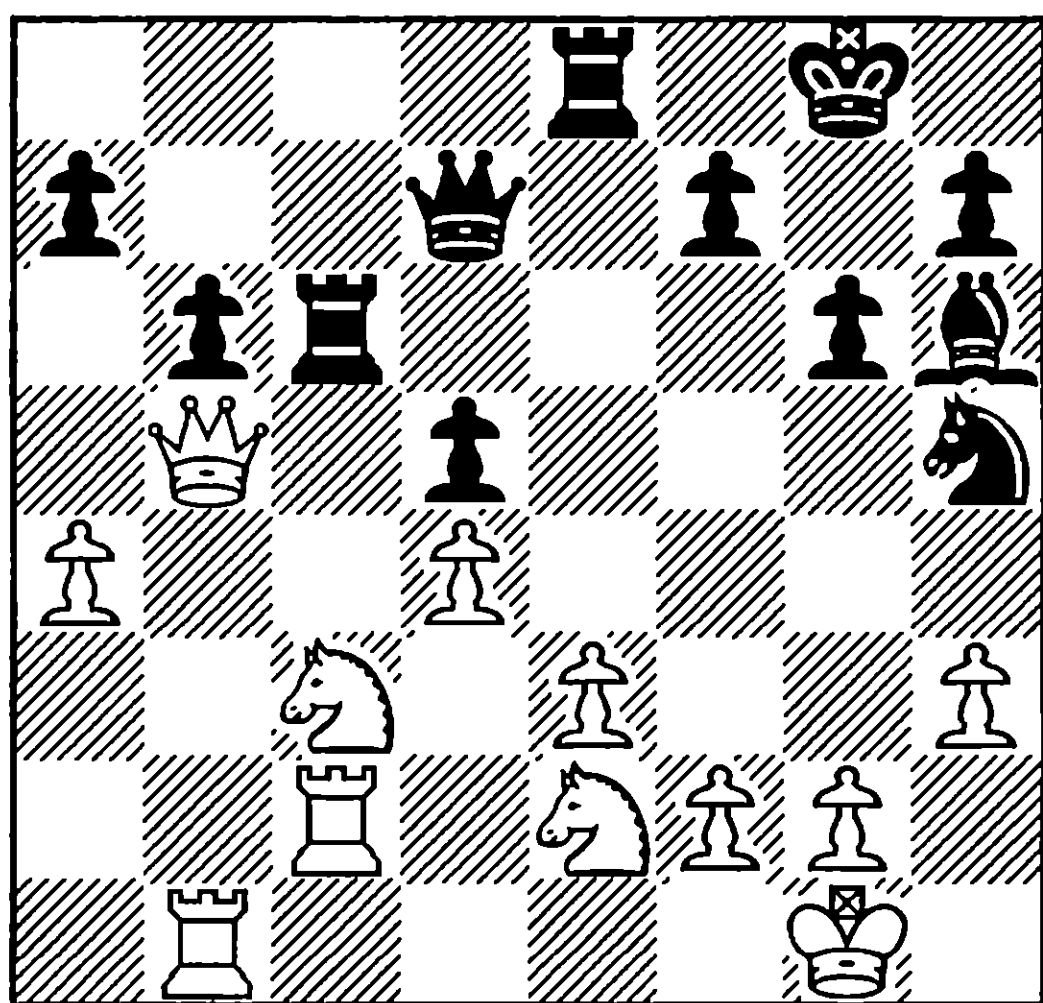
White hastens the end, but the position is already lost: 22 fxe3 gets demolished by 22...♙d5!, threatening the

knight and ...♞xg3+.

22...♞xg3+ 23 ♔h1 ♞xh4 24 fxe3 ♕d5+ 0-1

Missed opportunity

S.Reshevsky-I.Myagmarsuren
Sousse Interzonal 1967



Black to play

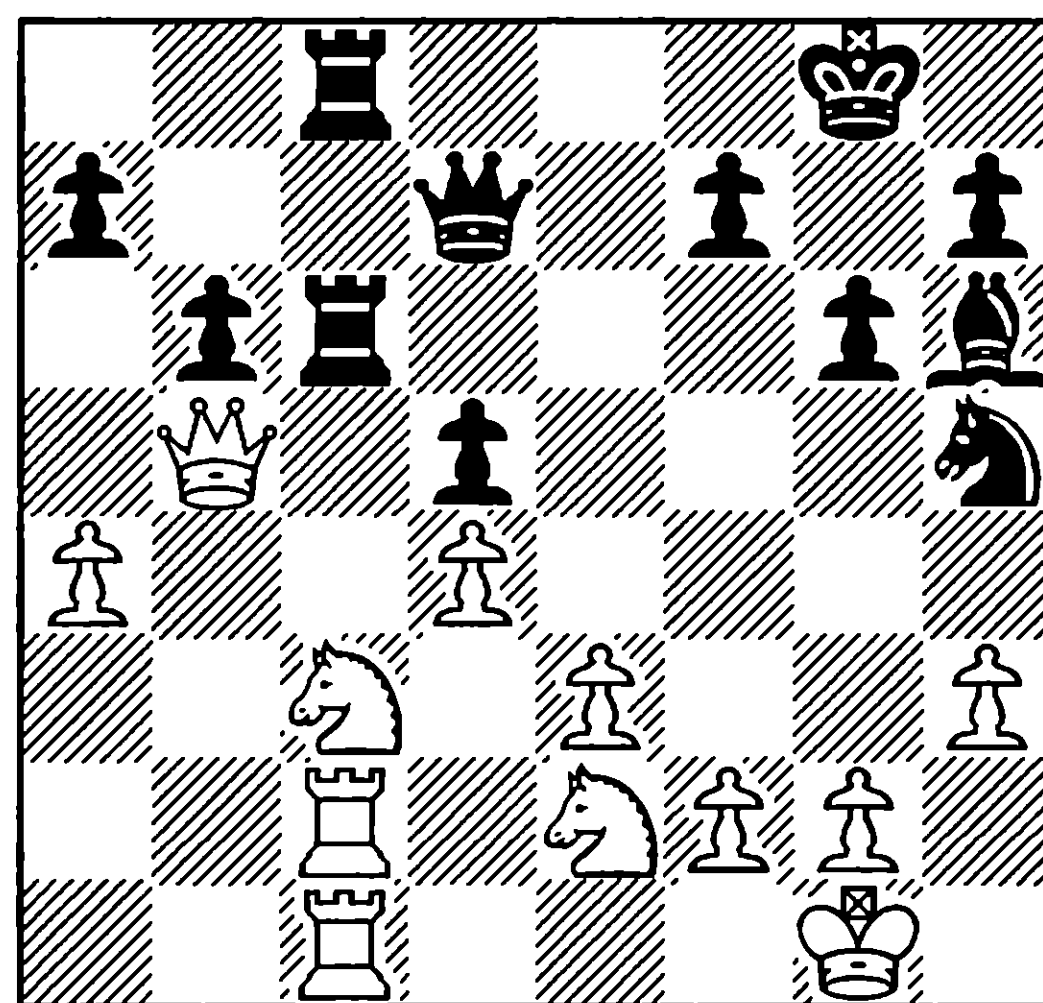
27...♞ec8?

This game caught my eye because it looks like a great case of predict-a-move. After all Black invites his opponent to take on d5 with the knight, since his own rook is pinned – but he planned the saving move ...a7-a6, so that when the white queen moves, he can take on c2 after all with a won position.

28 ♞bc1?

The top American grandmaster believes his opponent and resists the offer of the pawn. But in fact 28 ♞xd5! is a winning move in view of the combi-

nation 28...a6 29 ♞xc6 axb5 30 ♞xc8 ♕g7 (30...♞xc8 is useless due to 31 ♞e7+) 31 ♞xb6 ♞e7 32 ♞xb5 and White has a won position. Strangely, this all went unnoticed when the game was given in the (otherwise excellent) book *Winning Chess Strategies* by Sorrawan and Silman.



28...♞8c7?

Black returns the compliment with another mistake. After 28...♞e6 chances would be fairly even.

29 g4! a6

Or 29...♞f6 30 ♞xd5! ♞xc2 31 ♞xf6+ winning easily.

30 ♞xa6 ♞f6 31 ♞xd5! ♞xd5 32 ♞xc6 ♞xc6 33 ♞a8+ 1-0

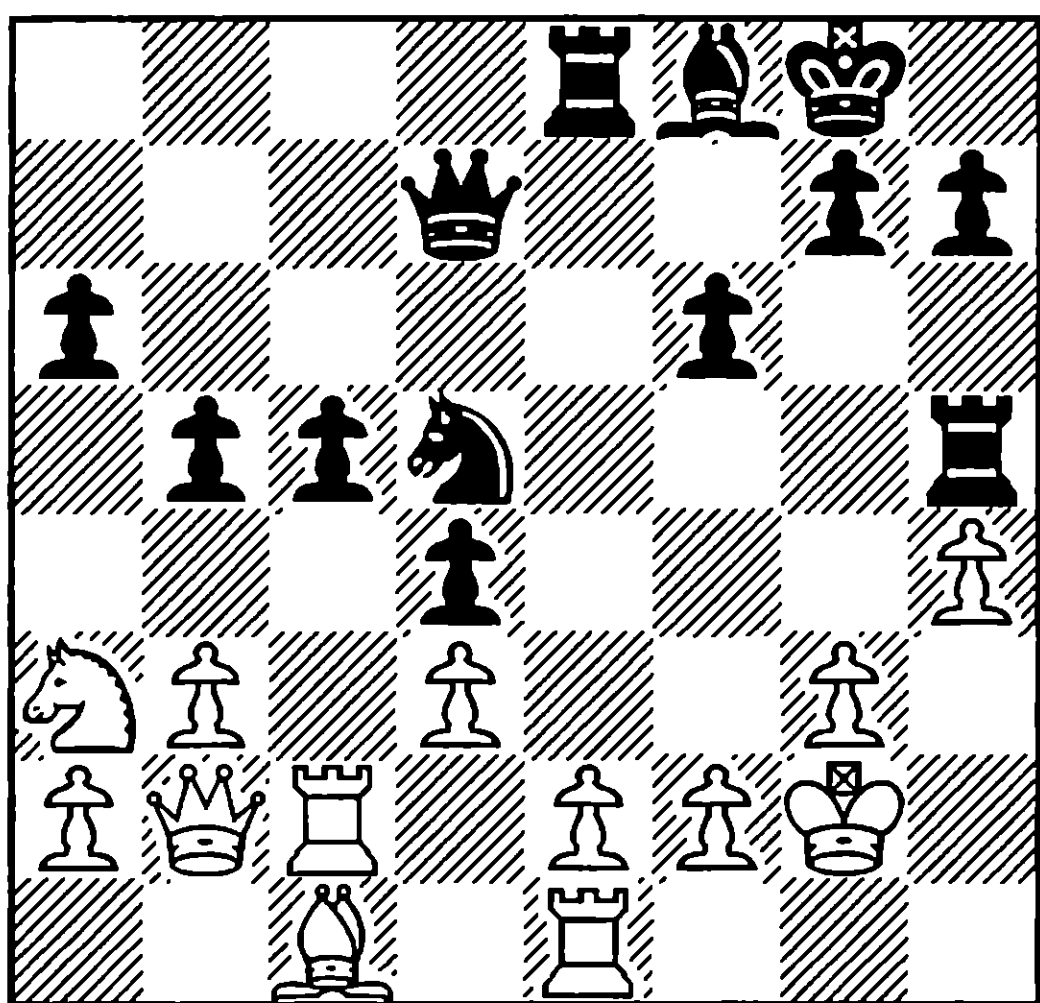
“Forward! Nothing but activity, the main thing is to impose your will on the opponent.” – Garry Kasparov.

Tales of the unexpected

The unexpected move can certainly change the course of the game. An obvious example is to give up a rook or queen as part of an attack, because the

defender does not always take into account the likelihood of such action. I remember the next game from my youth because it was so impressive. It contains a double whammy for White in that Black sacrifices material and then follows up – which appeared to me at the time to be quite mysterious – by just allowing another piece to be taken:

Morgan-R.Fine
Utah State
Championship 1940



Black to play

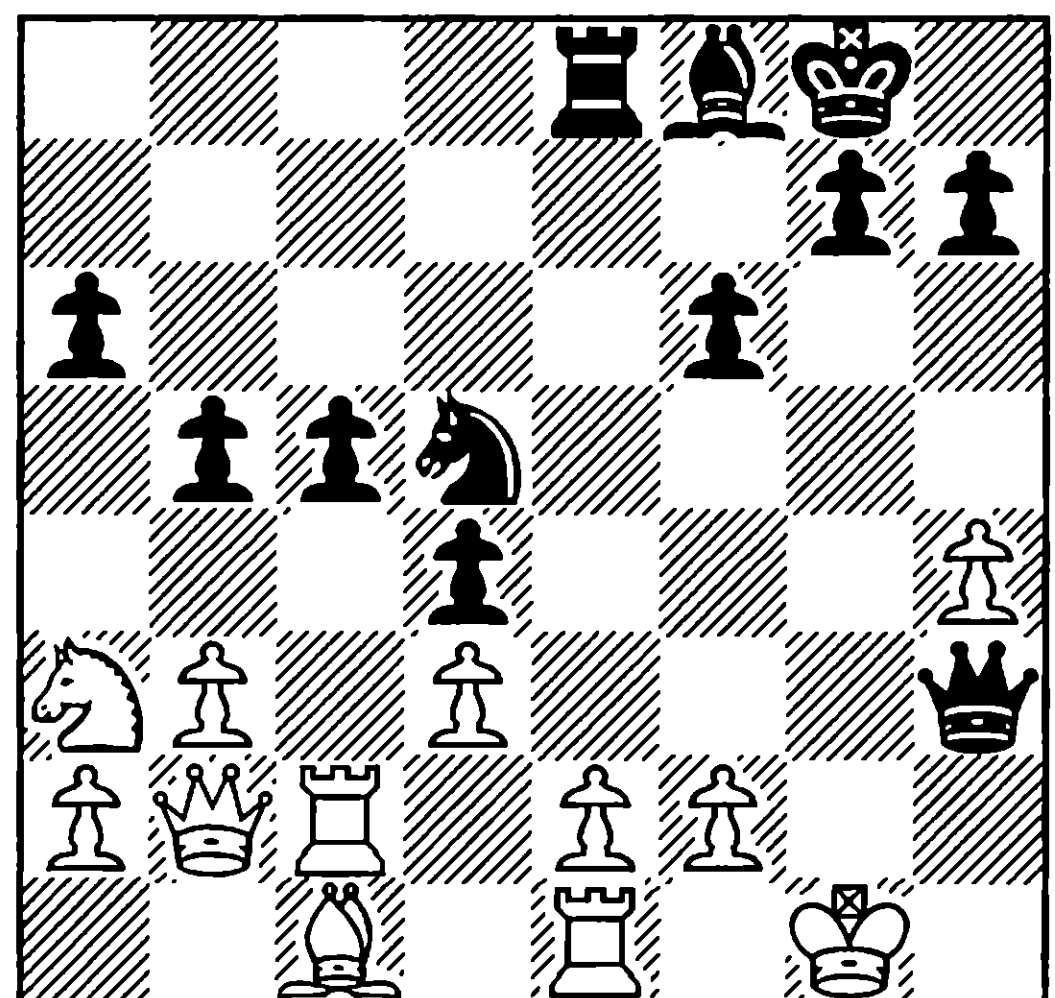
Even using the basic *count the pieces* method of assessing the position it should be clear that Black is on top, especially as it is his turn to move. White's pieces are jammed up on the queenside, effectively leaving the lone rook on e1 to put up a defence; whereas Black has an active rook on h5, another one on e8 jostling for position,

together with the knight and queen well placed to make an impact.

1...Rhx4!

My first thought was that 1...g5 should be considered, but the text is far superior, ripping open White's flimsy pawn shield by precise calculation.

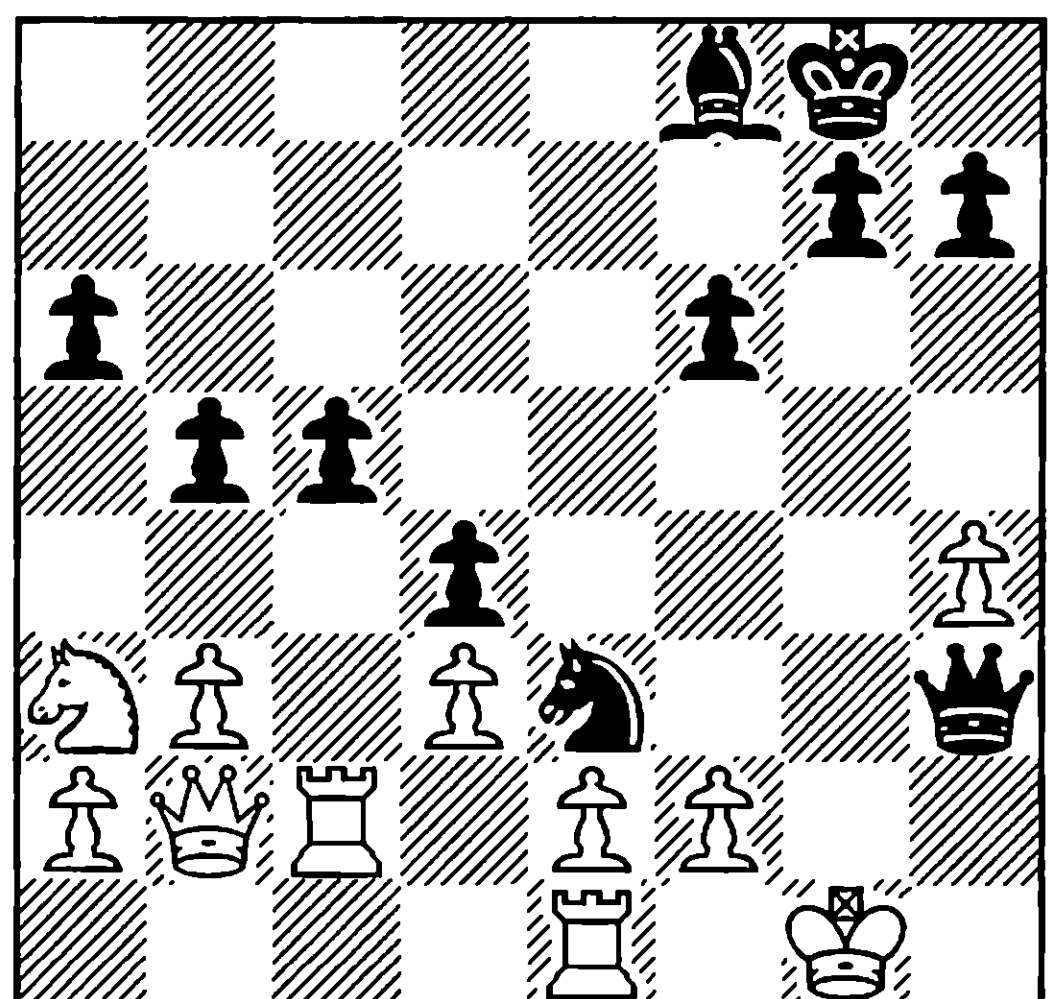
2 gxh4 ♖g4+ 3 ♔f1 ♜h3+ 4 ♔g1



4...Rxe3!!

A totally brilliant concept. By blocking the bishop on c1, Black threatens ...Nf4 and ...Qg2 mate, so the rook must be taken.

5 Bxe3 Nxe3



6 fxe3

White has no choice but to accept

this piece as well, since mate was looming on g2.

6...♔g3+ 7 ♔h1

7 ♔f1 is met by 7...dxe3 and mate on f2.

7...♕d6 0-1

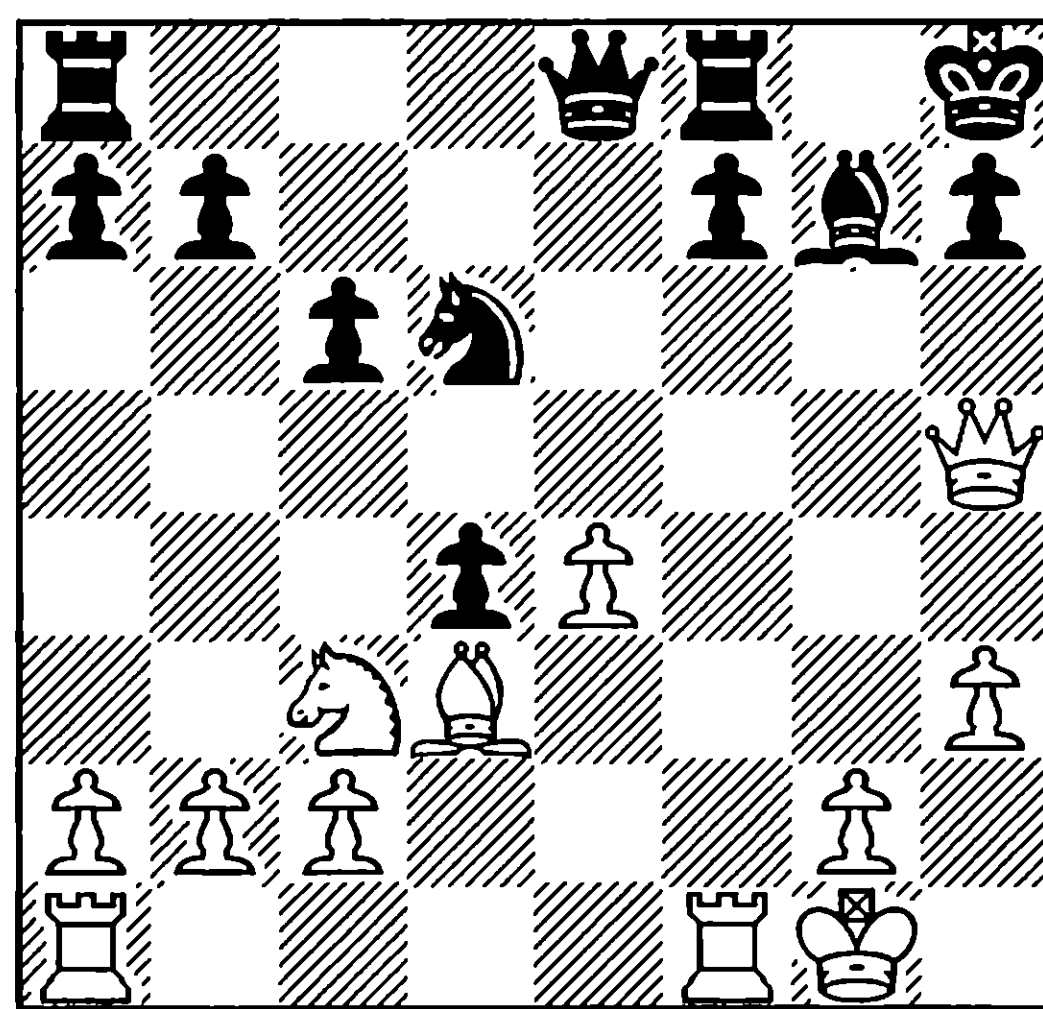
White has no defence against 8...♔h2 mate.

The celebrated American playing Black, Reuben Fine (1914-1993), was a fantastic talent who entered the prestigious US Open Championship seven times and won on every occasion. He was one of the strongest players in the world from 1936-1951, when he just about gave up competitive chess. The players on the US chess scene were upset because he was tipped as their best contender for the World Championship. Many years later the issue still rankled, causing the writer Gilbert Cant – in an article ‘Why They Play: The Psychology of Chess’ in *Time* magazine, 1972 – to come up with the amusing line: *“When Fine switched his major interest from chess to psychoanalysis, the result was a loss for chess – and a draw, at best, for psychoanalysis.”*

The legendary Bobby Fischer (Bobby was his nickname, though officially he was named Robert James Fischer) managed to surpass even Fine’s achievements by going on to win the World Championship in 1972, along the way notching up eight US Championships. The following game is taken

from the year he won with the incredible score of 11/11. The comparison with the previous Reuben Fine game is clear if you start to scan the board for the important motif of mysteriously just allowing a piece to be taken!

R.J.Fischer-P.Benko US Championship, New York 1963



White to play

19 ♖f6!!

The first time I saw this move – in Fischer’s classic book *My 60 Memorable Games* – I felt like I had glimpsed genius for the first time. However, the constant theme of recognizing patterns in chess should make it easier to spot. White would like to play 19 e5 to target the h7-pawn, but then 19...f5 is an adequate reply, blocking the mate and revealing a discovered attack on the white queen. The logic behind Fischer’s spectacular choice becomes clear,

when we realize that it simply prevents the black f pawn from advancing.

19...♙g8

Accepting the offered material leads to instant ruin: 19...♙xf6 is met by 20 e5 forcing mate; or 19...dxc3 (the knight was also en prise) 20 e5 h6 21 ♖xh6+! ♔g8 22 ♖h8+! ♙xh8 23 ♕h7 mate.

20 e5 h6 21 ♘e2! 1-0

Black resigned since there is no adequate response to the threat of 22 ♖xd6. For example: 21...♙xf6 22 ♕xh6+ or 21...♘c8 22 ♕f5! both lead to mate on h7 again.

“I prepare myself well. I know what I can do before I go in. I’m always confident.” – Bobby Fischer.

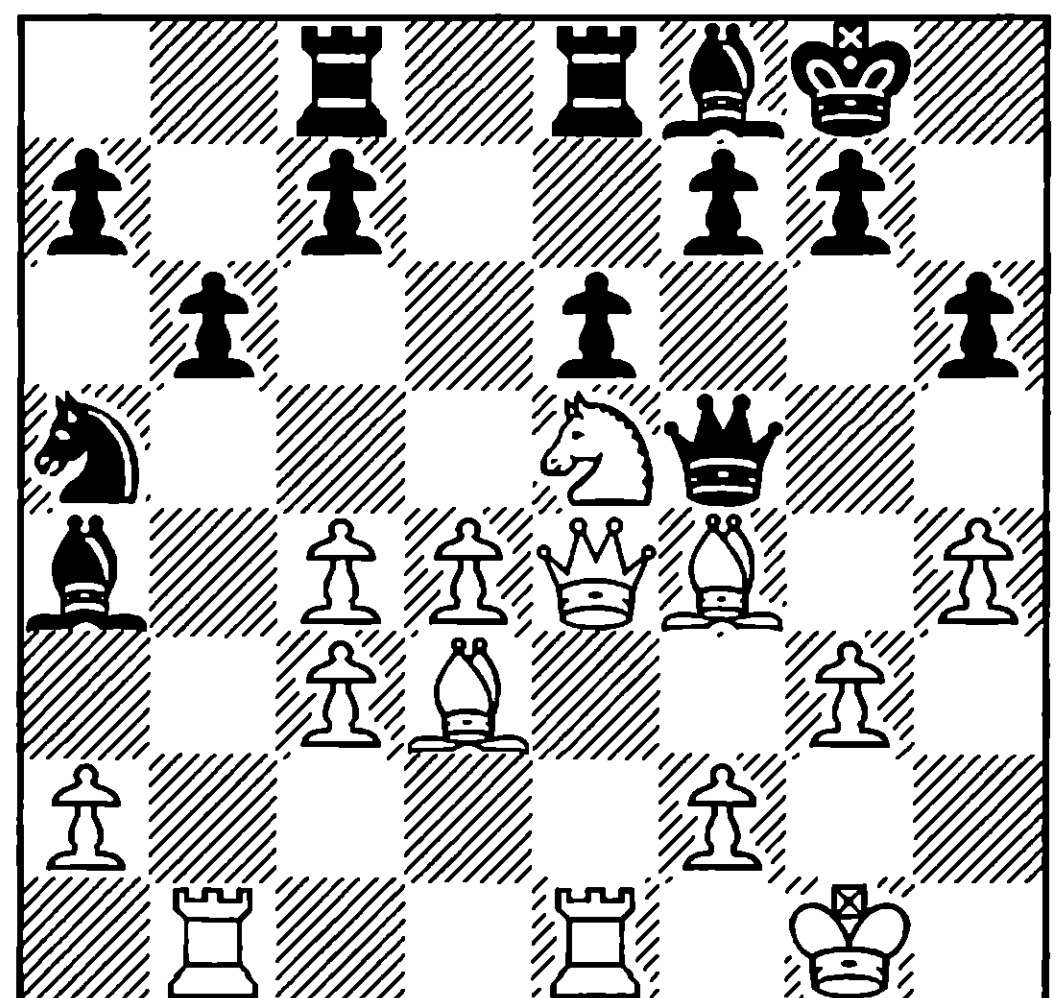
The backwards move is another example of how we should look for the unexpected during the game. After years of playing, one gets so used to pushing the pieces forward in an effort to achieve the advantage that backwards moves often don’t occur to us. (That is one of the reasons why computer programs are so annoying, because they scan everything and instantly pounce on such mistakes.) The key is to try and train yourself to glance at even strange moves, so that nothing is missed.

A lot of masters tend to look for unusual tactics while their opponent is thinking so they don’t lose time on the clock. That is a tough routine to keep

up, I have to admit, since there is a certain amount of logic in stretching your legs occasionally. But at the very least, looking for imaginative tactics is something that you should always bear in mind, especially when the position looks dangerous.

Here is the perfect example of a backwards move forcing resignation:

R.Filguth-A.De la Garza
World Student Team
Championship, Mexico 1980



White to play

19 ♕h1 1-0

Black resigned in view 19...♕f6 20 ♙g5! hxg5 21 hxg5, winning the black queen, since 21...♕xg5 allows 22 ♕h7 mate.

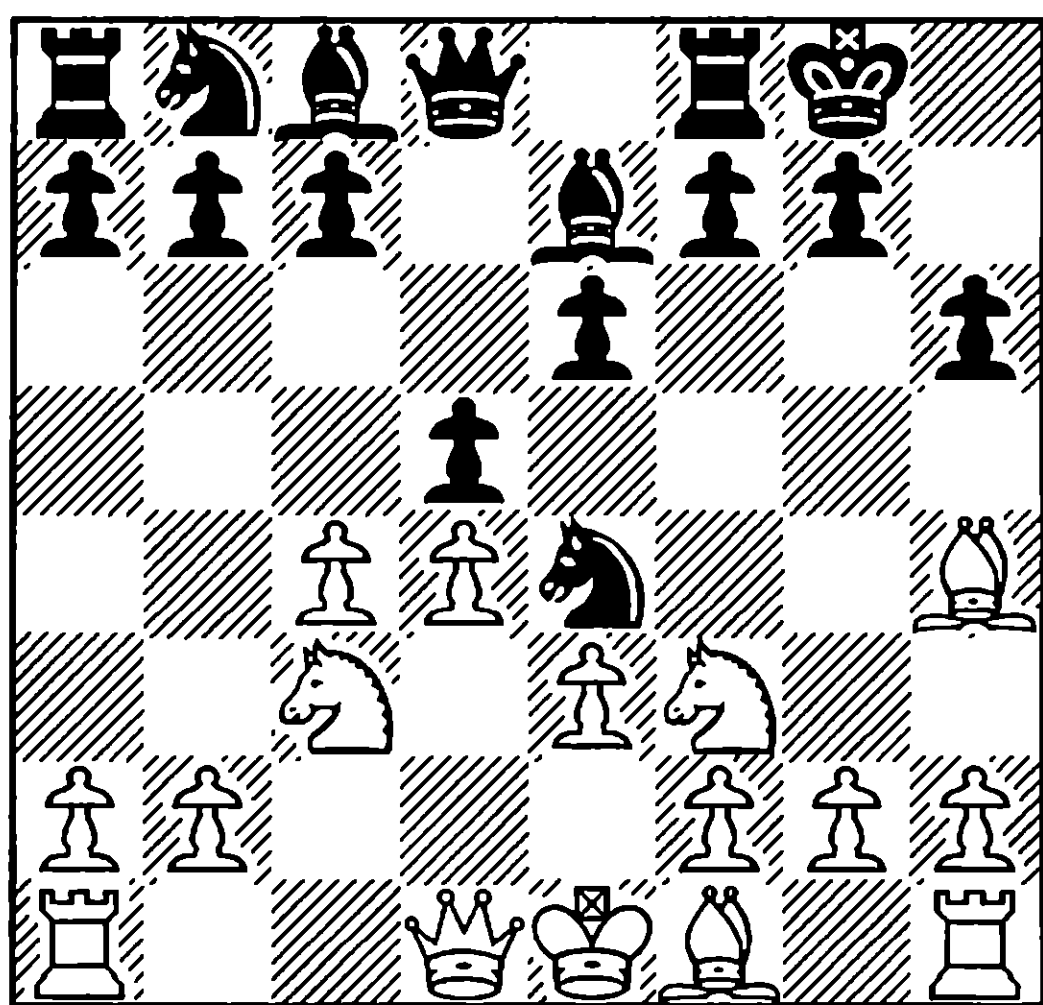
“And once I saw I could get his queen off, I thought, I’ll get his queen off. Maybe there’s some other forced win, but I am not going to look for it.” –

Vishy Anand, commenting on why he took the practical choice in the last game of his 2010 World Championship match.

The backwards queen move can make quite a difference – and the ultimate proof of that was the twelfth and final game of the 2010 World Championship match, in which a backwards queen move was the deciding factor. Here it is and it's winner takes all. A draw would lead to a play-off but victory results in being proclaimed World Champion.

Game 29
V.Topalov-V.Anand
 World Championship
 (12th matchgame), Sofia 2010
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♙e7 5 ♙g5 h6 6 ♙h4 0-0 7 e3 ♘e4



The Lasker Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined is a reliable choice

and is played with a safety first attitude. After the match Anand commented: "Before the final game we had a rest day, and I thought we have a day and a half, so let's move to the Queen's Gambit – I need an opening that is going to give me a good sensible game and not hang by a thread on some surprise weapon here or there. So we went for that and it worked brilliantly. Even if he had got a sensible draw, at least it would have got me to the tiebreaks in reasonable shape."

8 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 9 ♖c1 c6 10 ♙e2 ♘xc3 11 ♖xc3 dxc4 12 ♙xc4 ♘d7 13 0-0 b6

The last time Anand had reached this position as Black (against Grischuk, World Blitz Championship, Moscow 2009) he tried 13...e5 and eventually drew.

14 ♙d3 c5 15 ♙e4

15 ♙b5 is also worth investigating.

15...♖b8 16 ♚c2

16 ♚a4 is also well known, partly because Anand played it twice himself – against Kramnik in Cologne and Monaco.

16...♘f6

A little bit different, which is a good idea to keep the opponent guessing. 16...a5 is the main alternative.

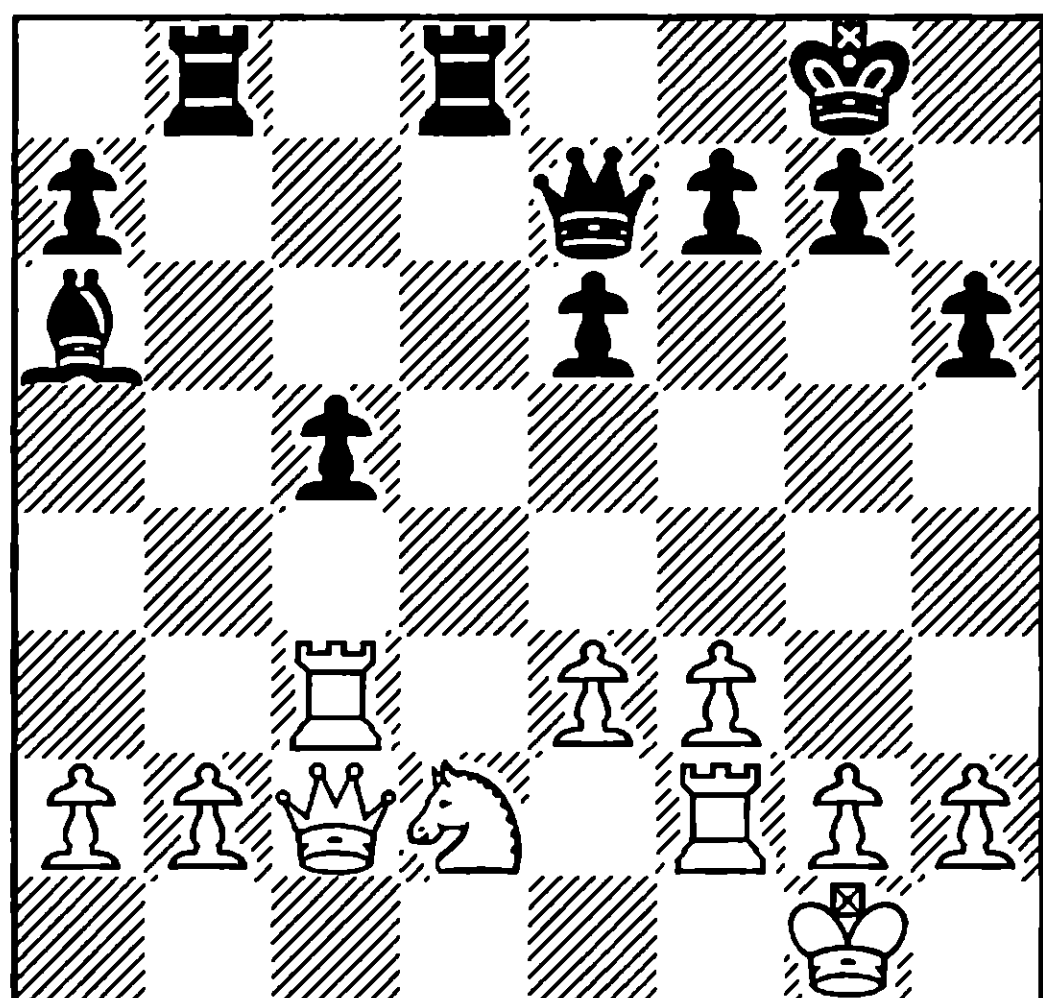
17 dxc5

The true test of Black's idea. White saddles him with an isolated c-pawn with the aim of rounding it up later on.

17...♘xe4 18 ♚xe4 bxc5 19 ♚c2 ♙b7 20 ♘d2 ♖fd8 21 f3 ♙a6 22 ♖f2

This is a critical position and Anand

had to think long and hard. A casual glance would seem to indicate that the e-pawn is doomed, so Anand now needs to play like a champion to make sure that White can't just improve his position and take the pawn off.



22...Rd7 23 g3

Alternatively, 23 Nf1 Bxf1 24 Rxf1 Wd8 or 24 Kxf1 Wh4 gives Black good play.

23...Rbd8 24 Kg2 Bd3 25 Wc1 Ba6

A silent draw offer, indicating that Black is happy to repeat moves – and if that is done three times then a draw can be agreed.

26 Ra3

One has to admire Topalov carrying on the fight, but maybe he just thought he was doing well.

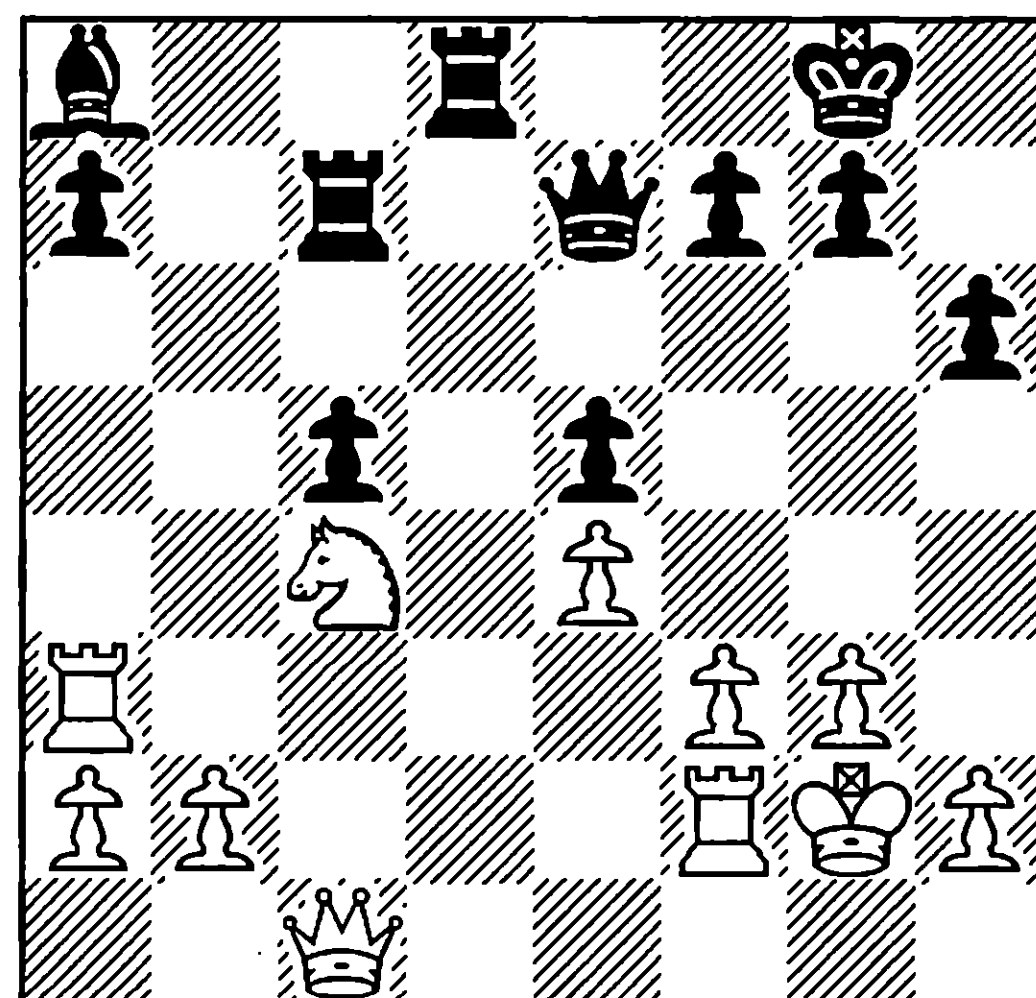
26...Bb7 27 Nb3 Rc7 28 Na5 Ba8 29 Nc4 e5

Anand is beginning to muster obvious counterplay – there is a good reason why he is regarded as one of the world's finest attacking players.

30 e4

White blocks the black e-pawn ad-

vancing further, to avoid such ideas as 30 Ad2 e4 31 f4 Ad3! 32 Ne5 f6! 33 Nxd3 exd3+ 34 Wf2 c4 with promising play for Black.



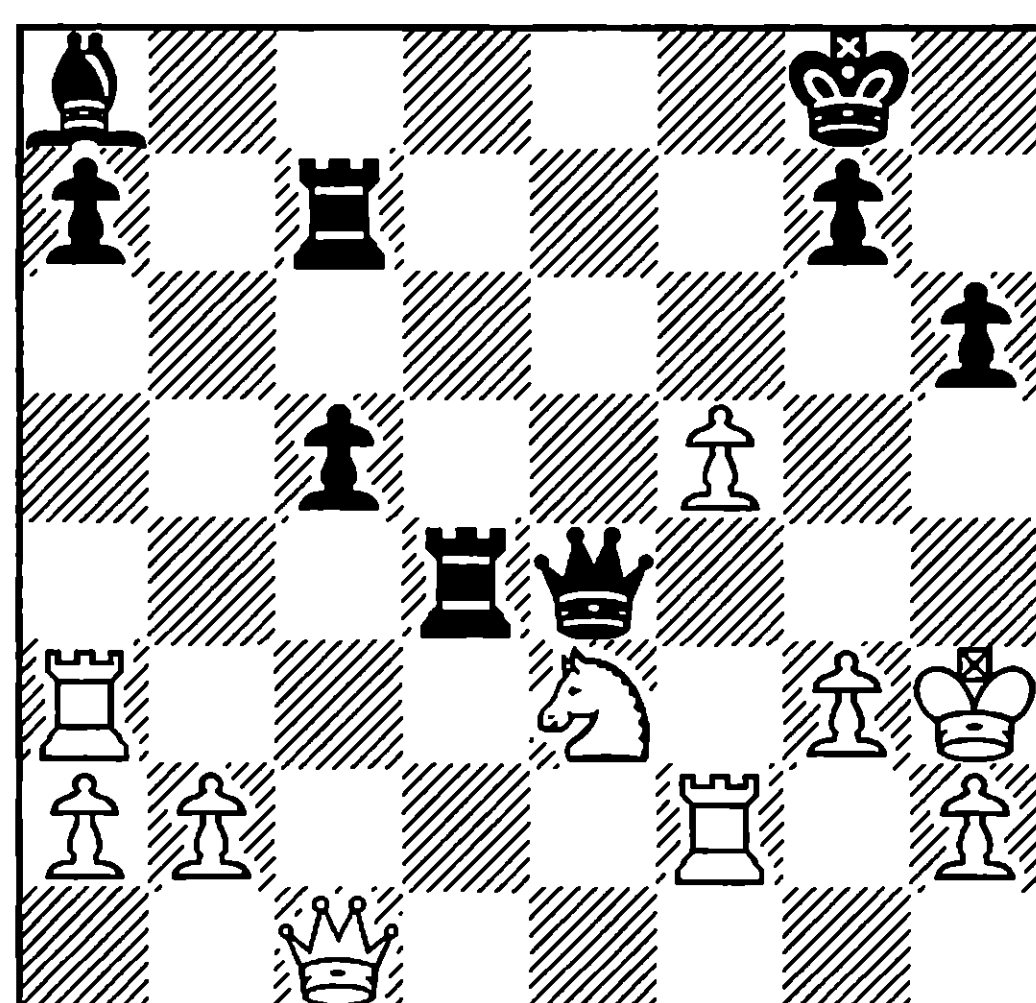
30...f5 31 exf5

Topalov had all this planned in advance, but there is a major hole in his analysis.

31...e4 32 fxe4 We4+ 33 Kh3

The king looks rather vulnerable on the side of the board, but if he can survive and hang on to his pawn White could end up as the World Champion.

33...Rd4 34 Ne3



34...We8!!

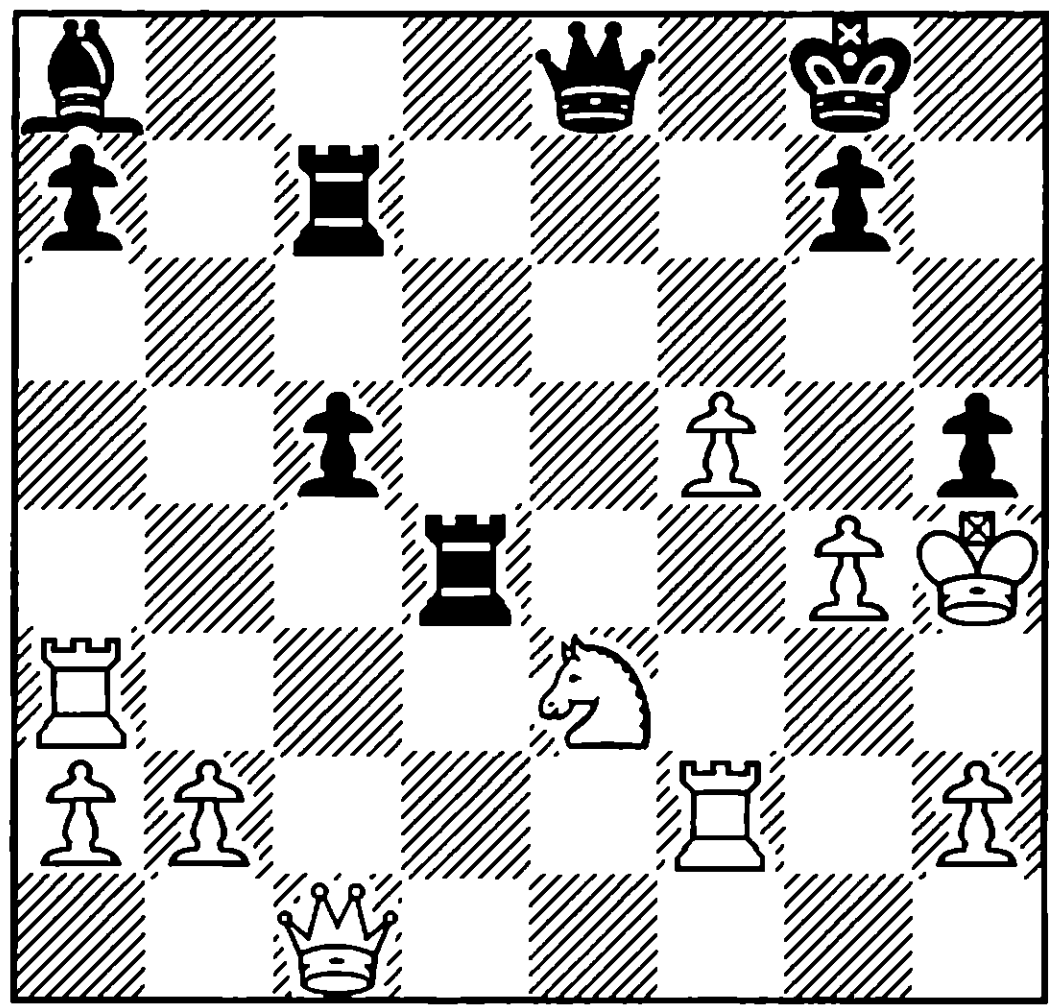
The backwards move with the

queen, threatening ...♔h5 mate, was overlooked by Topalov and suddenly it looks awful for White.

35 g4

The only way to stop the mate.

35...h5 36 ♔h4



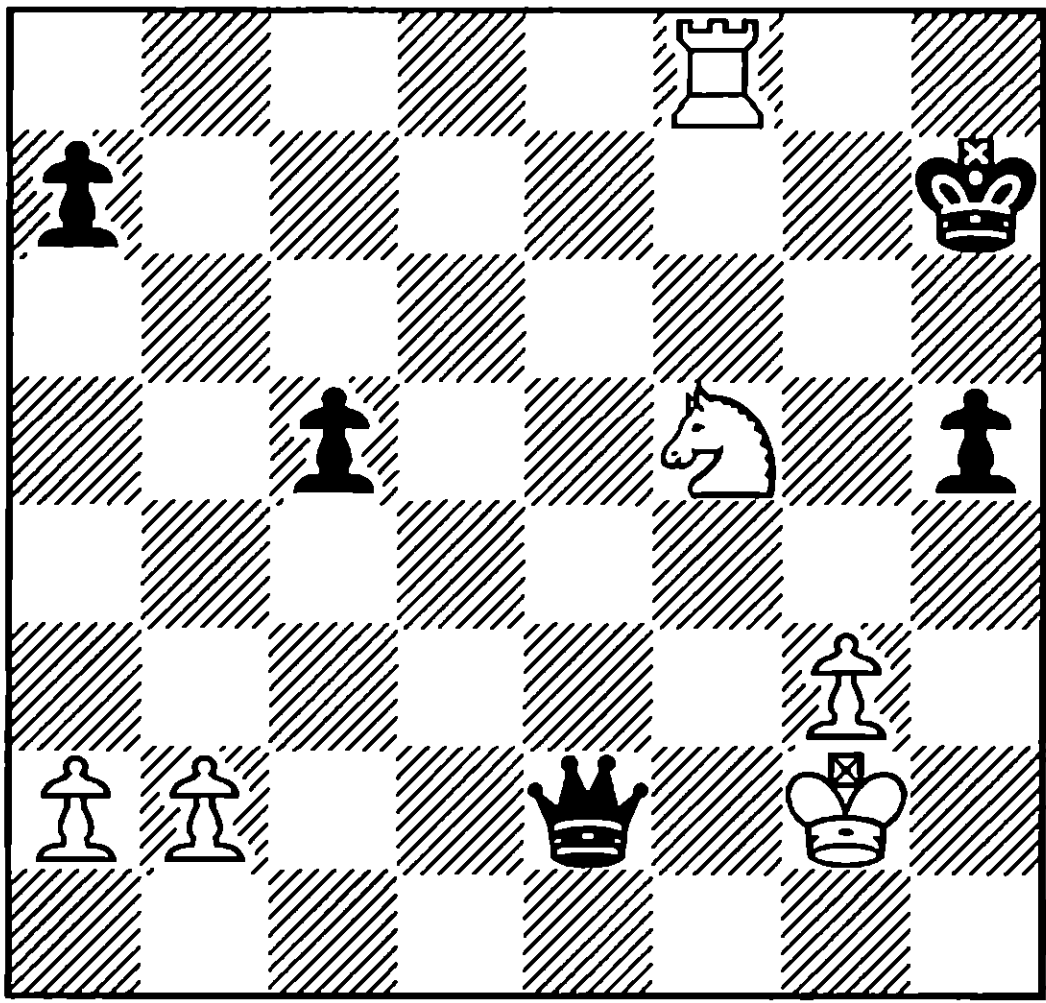
36...g5+

Anand spots the chance to win the queen with a clever combination and goes for it without wasting time and energy looking for something better. This is a classic case of being practical, and you will now understand the Anand quote I gave before the game. Nevertheless, the computer prefers 36...♔d8+! 37 ♔g3 (37 f6 hxg4 38 ♘xg4 gxf6 and ...♖h7+ is also very good news for Black) 37...♔d6+ 38 ♔h4 ♔h6 and White can resign.

37 fxg6 ♔xg6 38 ♔f1 ♖xg4+ 39 ♔h3 ♖e7

Another way to win was 39...♔g5 40 ♖f8+ ♔g7 41 ♔f2 ♖e4 42 ♖xa8 ♖xe3+! 43 ♔g3 (not 43 ♖xe3? ♔g4 mate) 43...♔xg3+! 44 hxg3 ♖xa3 45 bxa3 c4 46 ♖d8 c3 47 ♖d1 c2 48 ♖c1 ♔g6 etc.
40 ♖f8+ ♔g7 41 ♘f5+ ♔h7 42 ♖g3

♖xg3+ 43 hxg3 ♔g4+ 44 ♔h2 ♖e2+ 45 ♔g1 ♖g2+ 46 ♔xg2 ♔xg2 47 ♔xg2 ♔e2+



The ending is now hopeless for White.

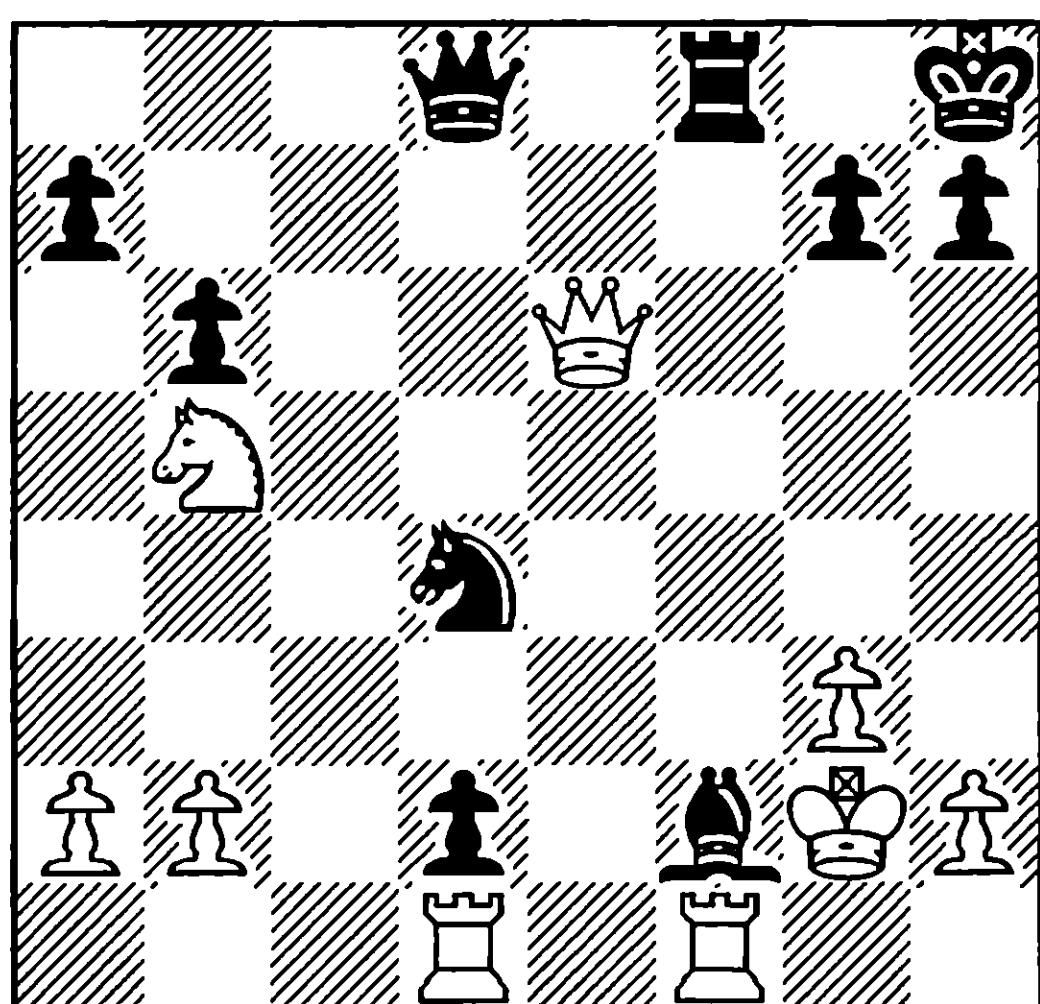
48 ♔h3 c4 49 a4 a5 50 ♖f6 ♔g8 51 ♘h6+ ♔g7 52 ♖b6 ♔e4 53 ♔h2 ♔h7 54 ♖d6 ♔e5 55 ♘f7 ♔xb2+ 56 ♔h3 ♔g7 0-1

"I am the kind of person that doesn't look back, simply because it's always about the future. I always look at the future. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose." – Veselin Topalov, reflecting on his failure to win the World Championship.

One could argue that it was White's plan (starting with 31 exf5) of moving his king to h3 that led to his downfall. There is no clear cut answer because you have to rely on calculation to make such a dramatic decision. In the following game White again relies for his defence on the king wandering over to h3, but on this occasion he is able to

survive as Black's pieces lack sufficient influence:

A.Beliavsky-A.Vyzmanavin USSR Championship, Leningrad 1990



White to play

27 ♖xd4!

A calculated gamble. 27 ♖e4?!, trying to control the a8-h1 diagonal, is soon dismissed by 27...♖e8; for example, 28 ♘d6 ♖xe4 29 ♘f7+ ♔g8 30 ♘xd8 ♕e3 31 ♘f7 ♖e6 and the passed pawn gives Black the superior ending.

27...♖xd4 28 ♖e2 ♖d5+ 29 ♘h3

White had this idea in mind when exchanging on d4. Unlike the Topalov-Anand game, Black cannot make the most of the exposed king because he lacks the light-squared bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal, while his rook is required to defend the back rank.

29...♖f5+ 30 ♖g4 ♖d5 31 ♖e2 ♖f5+ 32 g4 ♖f6 33 ♖e4

Grabbing the pawn with 33 ♖xd2?? would allow Black to go gleefully checking: 33...♖h6+ 34 ♔g2 ♖c6+ 35 ♔h3 ♖f3+ 36 ♔g2 ♖f6+ 37 ♔h3 ♖h6 mate.

33...♔g8?

A serious error, after which White can play 34 ♔g2 and 35 ♖xd2 with impunity. Instead, 33...♖d8 34 ♔g2 ♕e1 would have kept the balance. But it hardly mattered because, while he was making his move, Black's flag fell.

1-0

"You must be prepared to lose hundreds of games before you qualify yourself as a first-class player." – H.Peachy, writing in *Everybody's Guide to Chess and Draughts* (London 1896).

Chapter Five

Cashing in your Chips

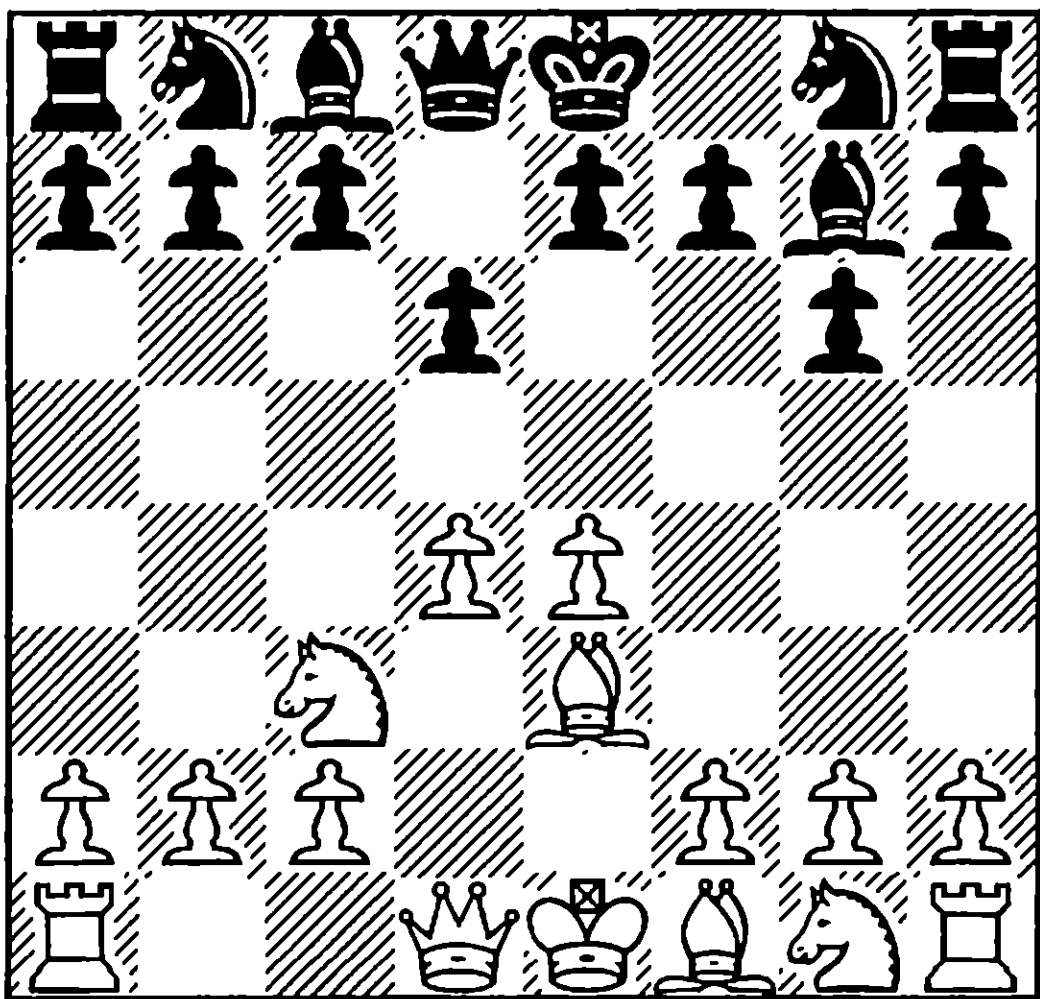
“I have no style – I just make moves.” – world class grandmaster Tony Miles.

It is wonderful to play an attacking game but too often the result does not match the effort. I’m sure we all know players who go all out for the king, sacrifice a piece or two, are on the brink of delivering checkmate only to end up having to resign when the defender is able to resist successfully and then exploit the extra material. A look in the best games collections of chess stars throughout the years reveals a tendency to attack when they have an edge – and a golden rule seems to be that, when possible, they will cash in their chips for a tangible advantage such as extra pawns or a piece. In other words, an attack will be happily halted if in return there is a winning advantage. This practical strategy might not win you best game prizes but it is sure to help you think more clearly at the board and consequently improve your level.

The first occasion that the merits of *cashing in your chips* really stood out for me was when I had the honour of playing former World Champion Vasily Smyslov in a tournament game. I had obviously seen many fantastic games by the veteran, and only a few years earlier had watched him in London taking on Garry Kasparov in a World Championship qualification match. It is somewhat curious to actually play one of your heroes, but one of the good things about chess is that the people you read about when young are usually good enough to keep on playing competitively later on in life. This certainly does not happen in the more physical sports such as tennis or football, so we can count ourselves lucky. The only snag for me is that this game always remains in my memory as what might have been, though it certainly taught me a lesson on when to convert an attacking advantage and the need to spend a little extra time on a critical position (see move 27 below).

Game 30
G.Lane-V.Smyslov
 London Lloyds Bank 1989
Modern Defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 ♙e3



I have used this line many times to attack and win. After 4...♘f6 I reply 5 ♙d2, when the general plan is to castle queenside and play ♙e3-h6 followed by h4-h5. This system eventually evolved a more subtle approach and the English nickname for the variation “the 150 Attack” caught on. (“150” is a reference to the English grading system; in Elo terms it would be “the 1800 Attack”.) It is so called because White’s opening looks like the sort of crude system favoured by club players, though it often works very well in practice.

4...♘d7 5 g3

This used to be a speciality of mine: playing a kingside fianchetto against the Pirc, especially after Black had put a knight on d7. This is because in the g3 lines I always thought the knight

should be on c6, so that ...e7 e5 puts more pressure on the d4-pawn.

5...e5 6 ♙g2 ♘gf6 7 h3

A simplistic measure to prevent ...♘g4, though it also prepares a later g3-g4 and ♘e2-g3, which is one of the themes I had discovered from playing the variation.

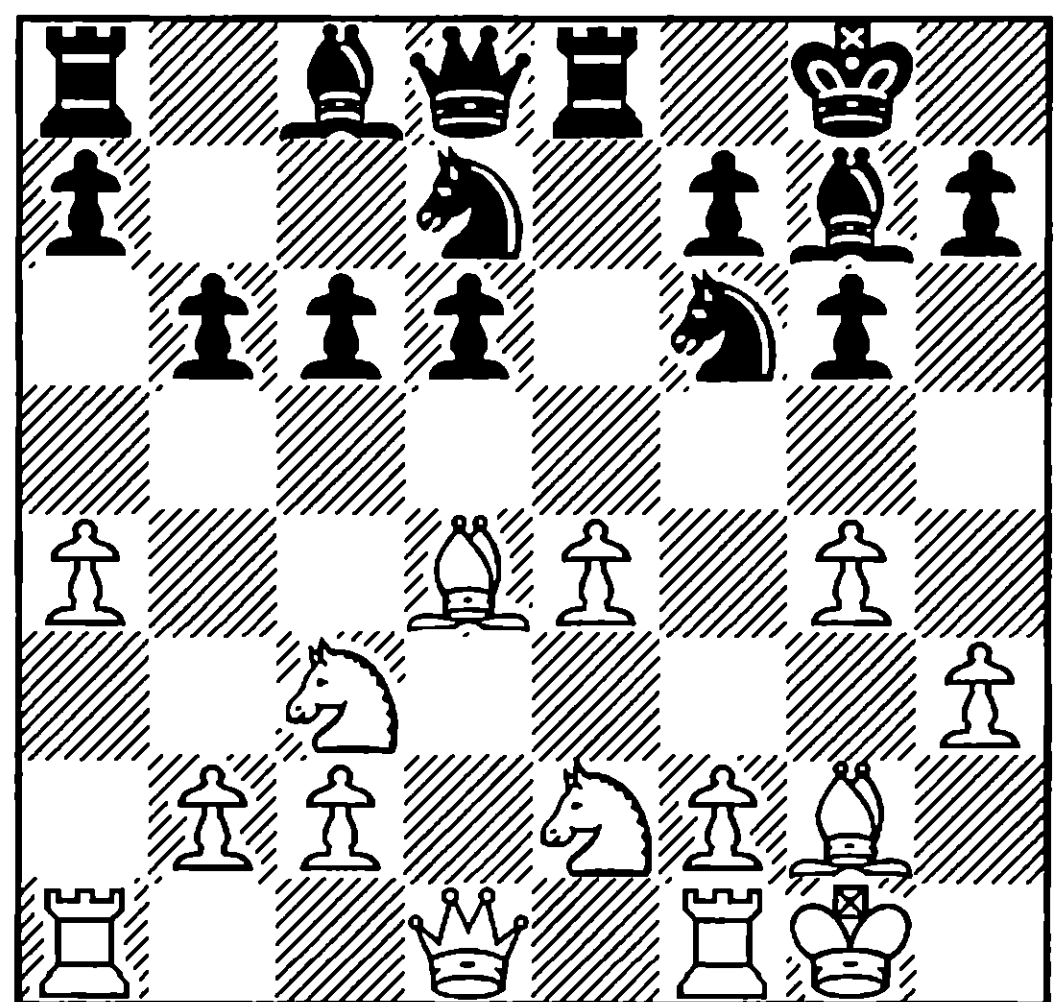
7...exd4 8 ♙xd4 0-0 9 ♘ge2

I am just busy developing, while Black is beginning to show interest in attacking my e-pawn.

9...♖e8 10 0-0 c6 11 a4 b6

Black is not quite ready to target the e4-pawn, because 11...♘c5 runs into 12 e5! ♘fd7 (not 12...dxe5? which drops the knight on c5) 13 exd6 ♙f8 14 ♙e3 and White remains a pawn up.

12 g4



This looks a bit odd, but it makes room for a knight manoeuvre from e2-g3, which is a good way to reinforce the e4-pawn, while in the long term White can ponder a kingside pawn avalanche with f2-f4-f5.

12...♘c5 13 ♘g3 ♙a6 14 ♖e1 ♘e6 15 ♙e3 d5

Smyslov doesn't allow me to build up gradually on the kingside, instead seeking exchanges in the centre and equal chances.

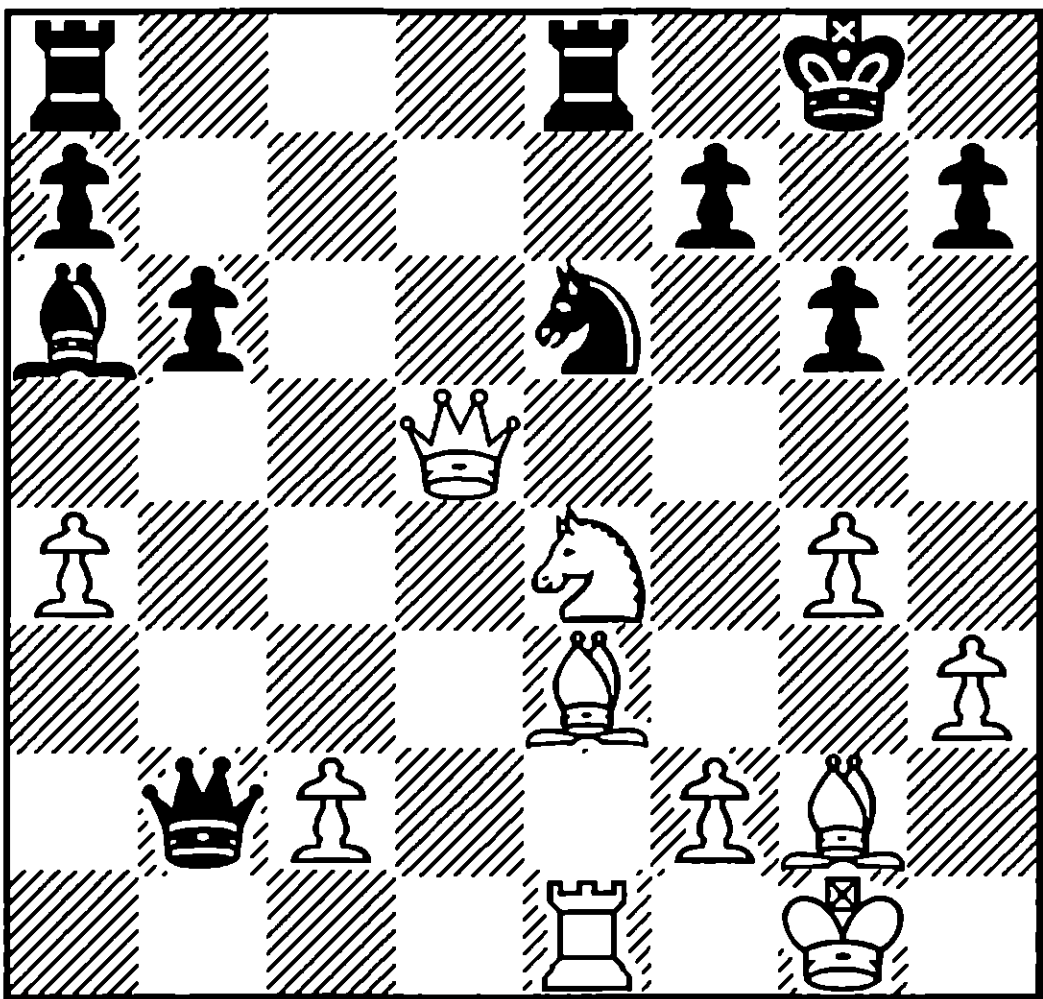
16 exd5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5 cxd5 18 ♔xd5 ♙xb2?!

This is a little ambitious, but the alternative 18...♔e7 allows White to dent the influence of the dark-squared bishop on g7 with 19 c3, ensuring a slight edge.

19 ♖ab1

I was already convinced I would soon be able to start attacking, because there are now a series of forced moves. Black dare not retreat the bishop with 19...♙g7 in view of 20 ♔xa8 ♔xa8 21 ♙xa8 ♖xa8 22 ♖ed1, when White is the exchange up and clear favourite to win.

19...♔f6 20 ♖e4 ♔g7 21 ♖xb2! ♔xb2



22 c3!

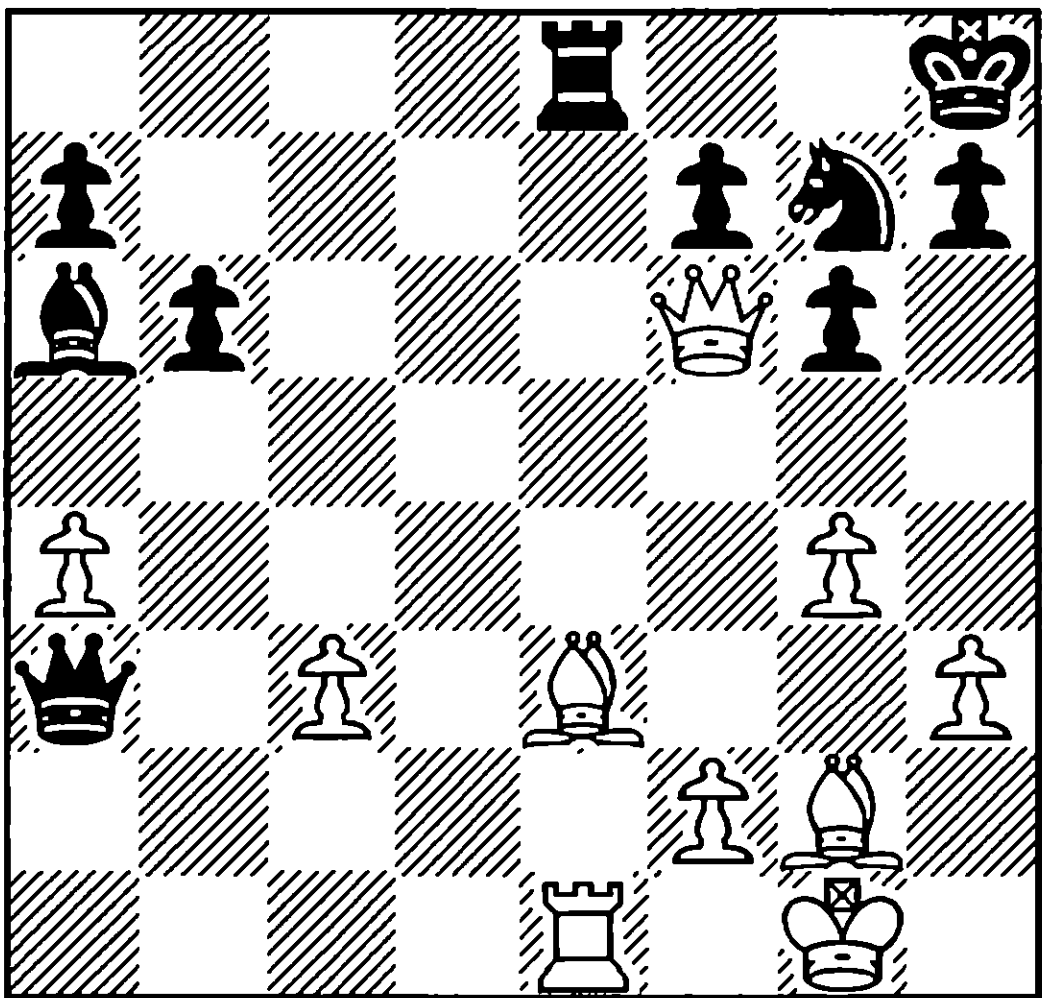
This is the quiet move which I assume the great man had missed. At a stroke I cut the black queen off from retreating to defend the kingside, and the gaping weaknesses of the dark-squares around the king are self evi-

dent. In short, Black is in trouble.

22...♖ad8 23 ♔e5 ♗g7

Instead 23...♖f8, to try and avoid returning material, backfires after 24 ♗f6+ ♔h8 25 ♙h6, when I can take the rook at my leisure and, more importantly, move my knight to reveal a discovered check with a huge advantage. For instance, 25...♔a3 26 ♖e8+ ♔g8 27 ♙d5! (threatening to take on e6 and mate on g7) 27...♖xd5 28 ♗f6+ ♔h8 29 ♗xd5+ ♔g8 30 ♔f6 and ♖xe6 leads to a forced mate.

24 ♗f6+ ♔h8 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 ♔f6 ♔a3



I now had to make a big decision whether to cash in my chips or not. Black is bound to return his queen to e7, so I need to see whether I can pursue the attack or grab the f-pawn. After a short while I couldn't help but think what would the maestro Smyslov do as White? A pawn up in the ending with two strong bishops sounds good – and indeed should be more than enough – but this meant I probably took the pawn a little too quickly.

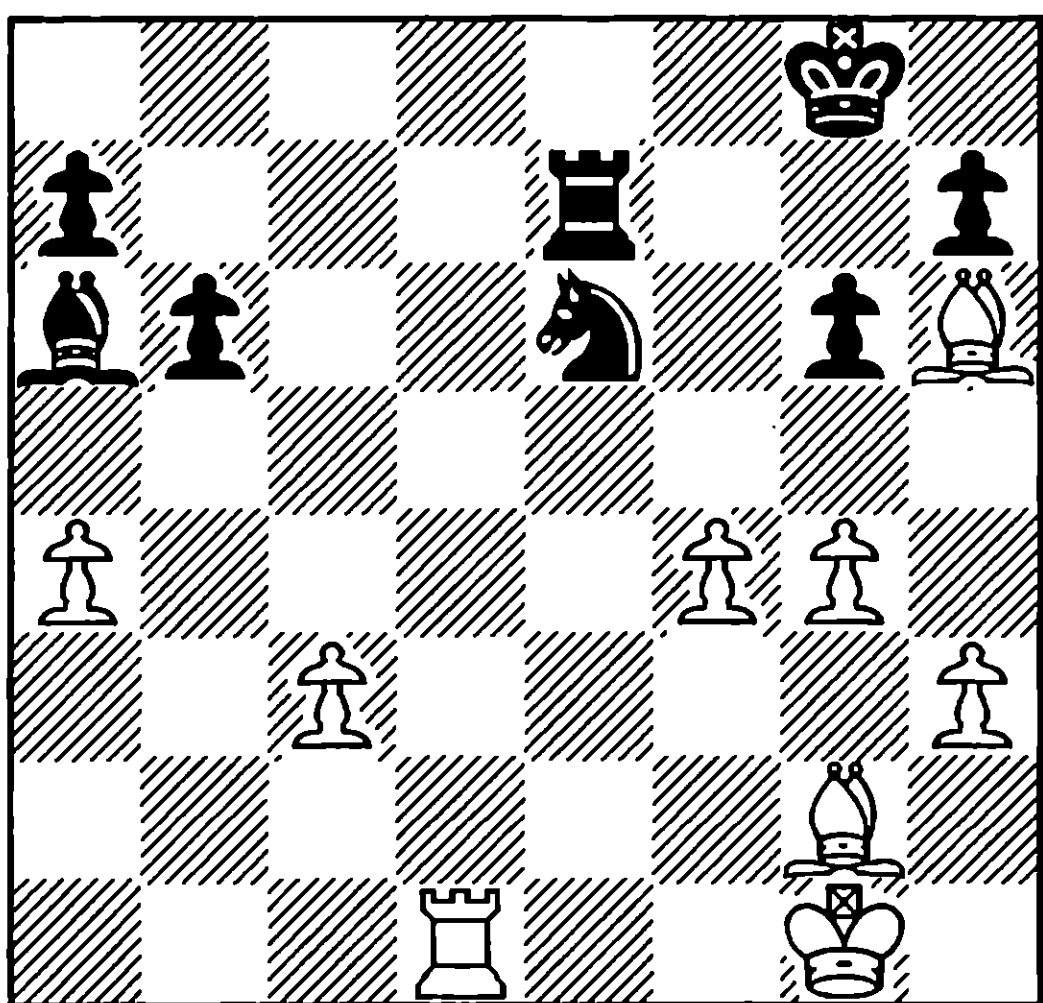
27 ♖xf7?

I had just put proudly my extra pawn on the side of the board when, with horror, I realized I had overlooked something major. Of course, one should forget about such things during play and concentrate on the rest of the game, but having seen 27 ♖f1! I couldn't help thinking what might have been – because it produces a wonderful finish by enabling me to move the dark-squared bishop without allowing a check on e1. For instance:

a) 27...♖xf1 (otherwise I just win a piece by taking on a6) 28 ♖h6 ♖g8 29 ♖xg7+ (29 ♖e8! is the way to show off) 29...♖xg7 30 ♖e8+ ♖f8 31 ♖xf8 mate.

b) 27...♖xa4 28 ♖h6 ♖g8 29 ♖e7 ♖c4 (otherwise ♖xf7 leads to mate) 30 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 31 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 32 ♖e8 mate.

27...♖e7 28 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 29 ♖d1 ♖e6 30 ♖h6 ♖g8 31 f4



Okay, I still have a pawn more, so the obvious idea is to create a passed pawn which I can then shuffle up the board with the help of the bishops.

31...♖f7 32 f5?!

Still distracted by what might have been after 27 ♖f1, I am sticking too rigidly to my plan. Here 32 ♖d5! is more precise because it prevents Black from trying to use an active king on f6 to safely block the advance of the f-pawn. For example:

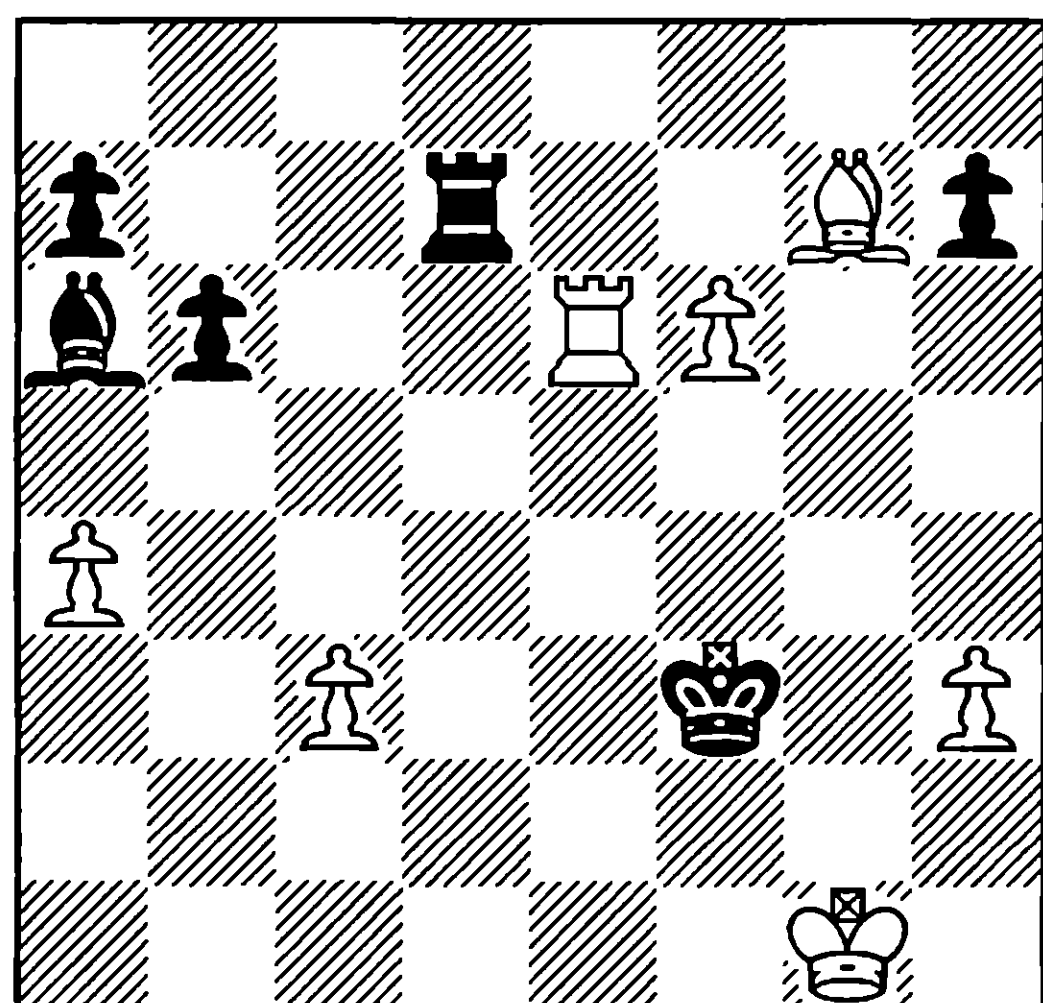
a) 32...♖f6 33 ♖e1 ♖c8 (or 33...♖xf4 34 g5+ ♖f5 35 ♖xe7 ♖xd5 36 ♖xh7 winning) 34 ♖g5+! ♖xg5 35 fxg5+ ♖xg5 36 ♖xe7 and White is a rook up.

b) 32...♖e8 33 f5 gxf5 34 gxf5 ♖d8 35 f6 ♖e5 36 ♖g7 with an easily won position, since the pawn is ideally placed and Black has hardly any decent moves available.

32...gxf5 33 gxf5 ♖c5 34 ♖d8

I am still working on ways to get the black king out of the way so I can safely advance the f-pawn. The strategy is correct, but making sure of my moves means I am falling behind on the clock.

34...♖f6 35 ♖f8+ ♖e5 36 f6 ♖d7 37 ♖g7 ♖e6 38 ♖e8 ♖f5 39 ♖e4+ ♖xe4 40 ♖xe6+ ♖f3



41 ♖e7?

A time-trouble blunder. Instead, 41 ♖h6! would have just about justified my decision to cash in my chips prematurely back on move 27. The point is that Black can't keep checking with the rook because d2 is covered by the bishop, and amazingly I am also threatening mate in one move with 42 ♖e3, so likely lines are:

a) 41...♔g3 42 ♖e3+ ♔h4 43 ♖e7 ♖d1+ 44 ♔h2 ♙c4 45 ♙f4! (the threat of ♖xh7+ is the best prelude to winning the piece) 45...♔h5 46 f7 ♙xf7 47 ♖xf7 winning easily.

b) 41...♖d1+ 42 ♔h2 ♖d7 43 ♖e3+ ♔f2 44 ♖e7 ♖d8 45 f7 and wins.

41...♖d1+ 42 ♔h2 ♖d2+ 43 ♔g1 ½-½

"You missed checkmate." – The first and last words to me by a bemused-looking former World Champion and passed on by a polite translator.

The issue of the need to cash in your chips is more evident once you start looking for it in other games. Brilliant king chases are a joy to watch, but the majority of games see strong players taking a practical decision to make sure they win.

In the next game the prize in the match is a place in the final of the World Championship to challenge Garry Kasparov. The stakes are high and so are the nerves but White holds his steady, allowing his attack to fade in return for the chance to cash in his chips:

Game 31

J.Timman-N.Short

Candidates final (7th match-game), El Escorial 1993

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙xc6

The Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez has been known a long time and in the 1960s was championed by Bobby Fischer who used it to great effect. Timman has also been a long-term admirer, and in recent years elite grandmasters such as Karjakin and Radjabov have added it to their opening repertoires.

4...dxc6 5 0-0

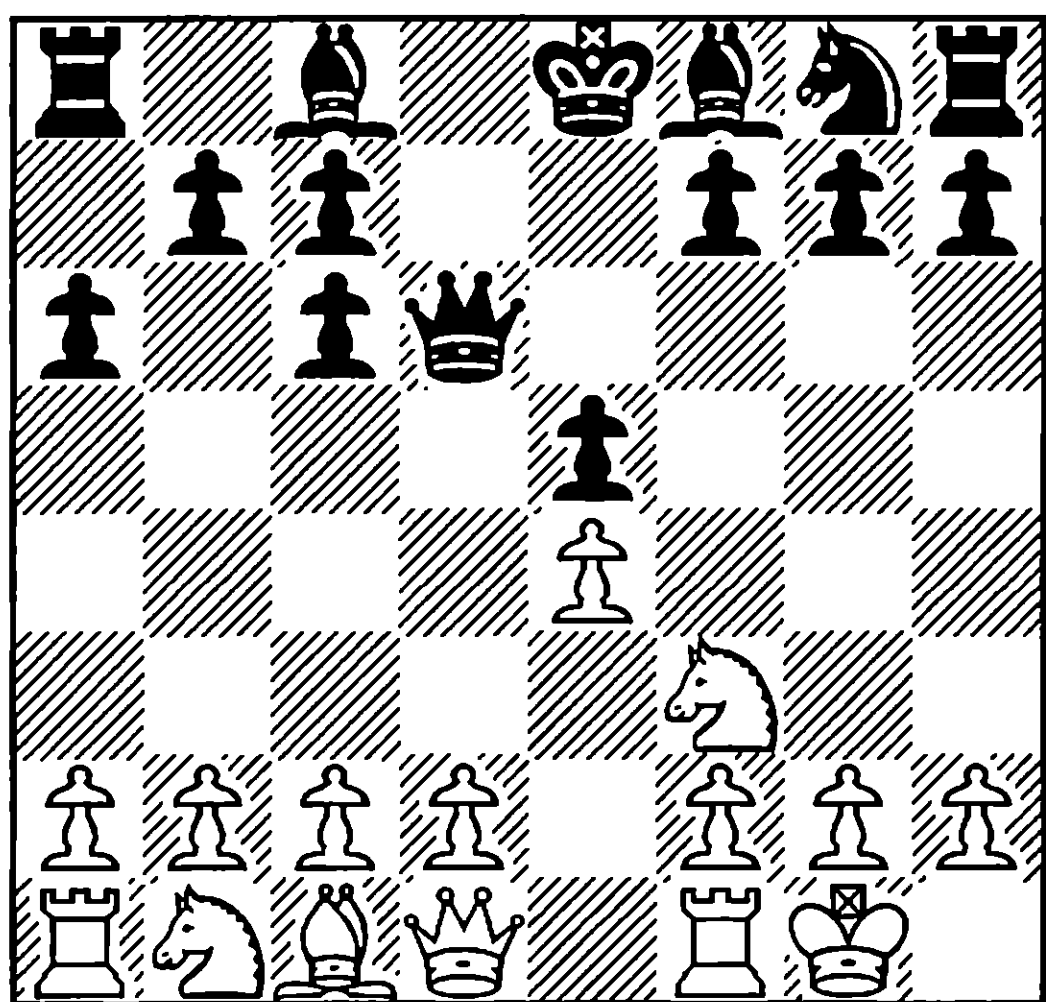
In junior tournaments 5 ♘xe5 sometimes wins a pawn, but experience soon teaches us that 5...♙d4! easily wins it back for Black, with the added bonus of a slight initiative after 6 ♘f3 ♙xe4+ 7 ♙e2 ♙xe2+ 8 ♔xe2 ♘f6 due to the two bishops. Once White has castled short, however, 6 ♘xe5 becomes a real threat, since 6...♙d4 7 ♘f3 ♙xe4?? would now lose the queen to 8 ♖e1.

5...♙d6

It looks a bit odd to defend the e-pawn in this way, but the merits of the queen advance were advocated by former World Championship contender David Bronstein and it caught on with leading players. The idea is to add some flexibility to Black's position, who still has a choice as to where to develop his

queen's bishop, while preparing to quickly castle queenside.

Another popular option is 5...f6, again protecting the e-pawn, when the resulting ending from 6 d4 exd4 7 ♞xd4 c5 (not 7...♞c5? which loses a piece to 8 ♞h5+) 8 ♞b3 ♞xd1 9 ♞xd1 is still being debated as to who is better. I am inclined to believe that White has superior winning chances in practical play because Black needs to find accurate moves to hold the endgame. The argument by White is that if you could magically exchange all the pieces in this position, then the king and pawn ending is winning thanks to the king-side pawn majority. This is because White will be able to create a passed pawn, whereas Black cannot do the same with his damaged queenside. In reality, Black's pair of bishops offer compensation for the doubled c-pawns and there are plenty of drawn games to demonstrate that the position is objectively roughly level.



6 ♞a3

The immediate threat is 7 ♞c4,

winning a pawn. Another, more positional idea is that 6...b5 can be met by c2-c3, followed by ♞c2 and d2-d4 to contest the centre.

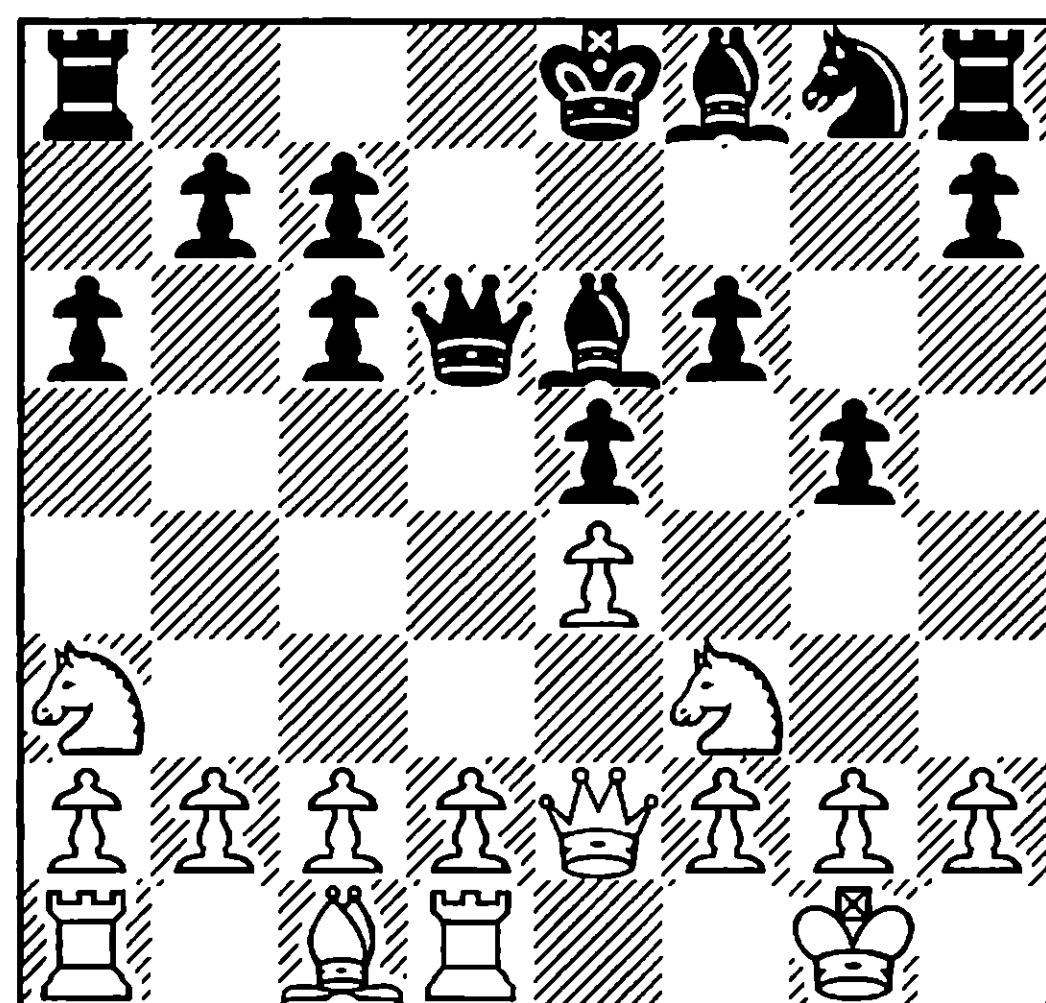
6...♞e6 7 ♞e2

White gives the queen's knight a helping hand by covering the c4-square. The exchange of bishop for knight would favour him since Black would no longer have the pair of bishops as compensation for the doubled c-pawns.

7...f6 8 ♞d1

A standard idea in this line to force through d2-d4 at an early stage, which explains why 7 ♞e2 is popular for White, since the rook will be useful in making sure the black queen has to move again.

8...g5?!



This goes against the usual plan of development and castling in the opening. Of course there are exceptions to the rule, but this is not one of them, even though it apparently took thirty minutes at the board for Short to come up with this new idea.

9 d4 g4 10 ♖e1

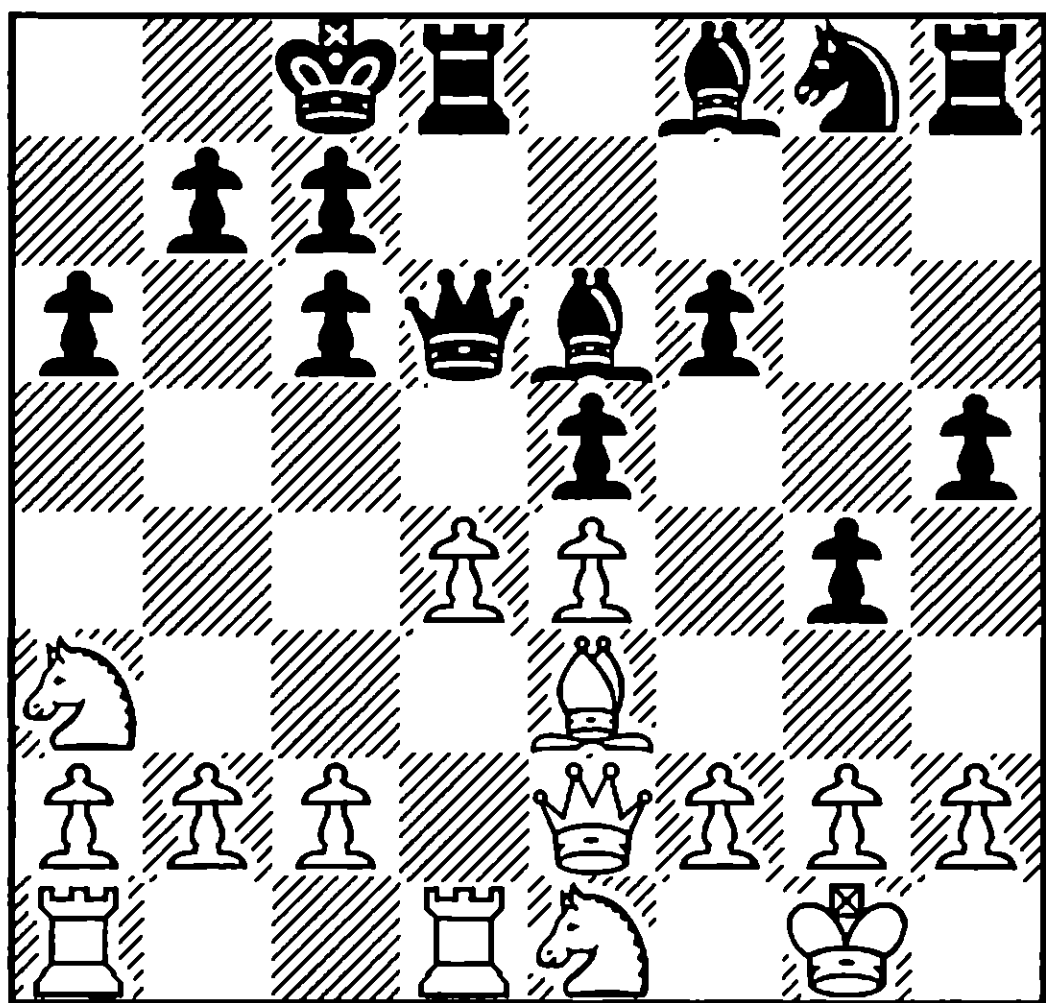
A good move, hiding the knight away in the expectation of concentrating on a queenside attack. Instead, 10 ♘h4 would temporarily hold up a kingside pawn advance, but would also act as a target for Black.

10...0-0-0

10...exd4 does not win a pawn, as after 11 c3! (taking advantage of the pin on the d-file) 11...c5 12 ♘ac2 0-0-0 13 cxd4 White wins the pawn back with interest.

11 ♙e3 h5

An attempt to distract White by feigning counterplay, but the h-pawn is really only destined to protect the g-pawn.



12 d5!?

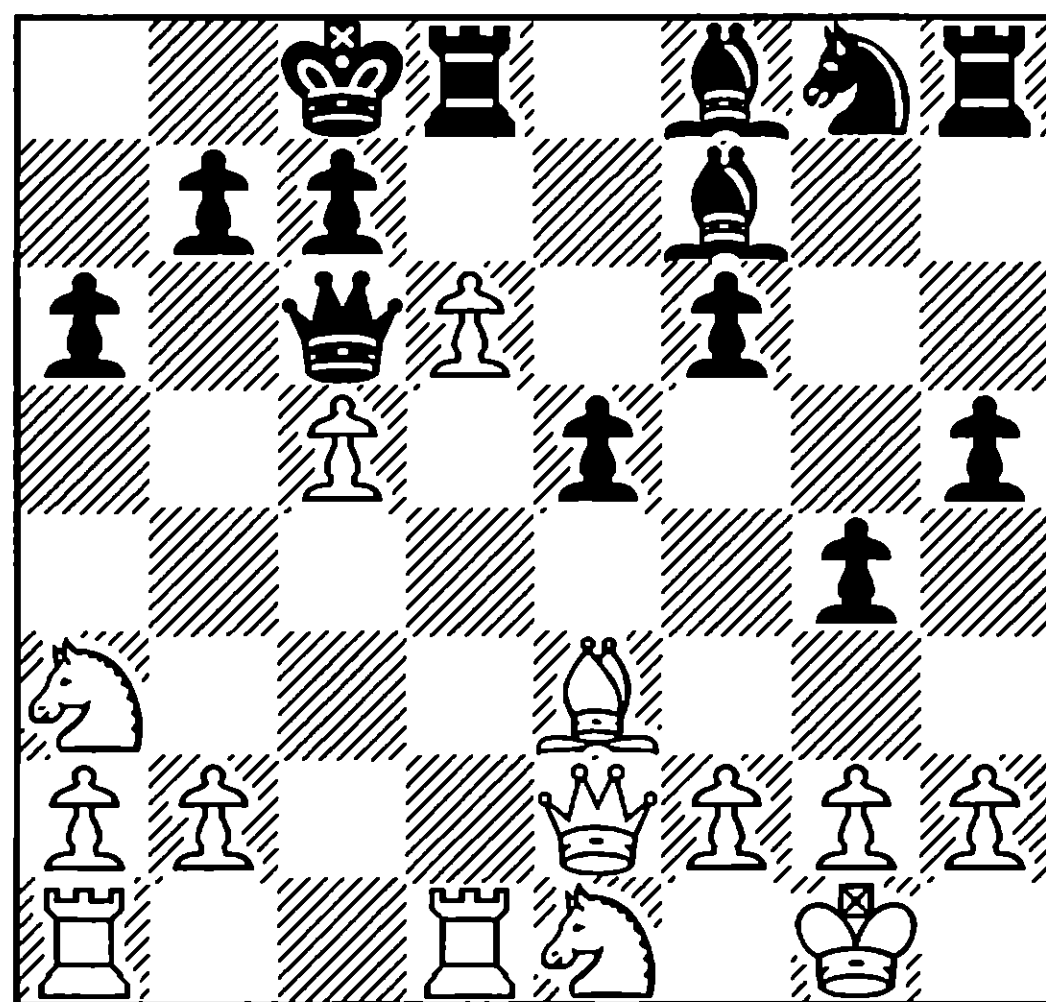
It took Timman twenty seven minutes to decide upon this pawn advance. A good point to remember is that strong players usually spend more time thinking on critical moves that change the nature of the position to make sure they get them right. As an alternative, I think 12 dxe5 ♙xe5 13 ♘c4 ♙b5 14

♙xd8 ♙xd8 15 ♙d1 ♙c8 16 b3 intending ♙d2 also looks good, seeing that Black has such poor development.

12...cxd5 13 exd5 ♙f7 14 c4 ♙d7 15 d6! ♙c6?

The true test of the gambit is to accept it; i.e. 15...cxd6, when Timman was going to play 16 ♘d3 and slowly improve his position by, for example, ♙b6 and ♘b4-d5.

16 c5



A good example of coolly pursuing the attack by topping up the pressure. Perhaps Short was hoping to justify 15...♙c6 by inviting the knight sacrifice 16 ♘b5? which looks good at first glance, but after 16...axb5 17 cxb5 ♙c4 18 dxc7 ♙d6! the attack has evaporated leaving Black with an extra piece.

16...♘h6

Black is belatedly getting the rest of his pieces out, but in the meantime White can carry on attacking. The pawn on d6 is immune from capture due to 16...cxd6? 17 cxd6 ♙xd6 18 ♙ac1, pinning the queen.

17 b4 ♙a4 18 ♘c4! ♙d7

The ploy of grabbing a pawn with 18...♙xb4 and trying to hang on does not work when White's pieces are already concentrated on the queenside. For example: 19 dxc7 ♖xd1 20 ♔xd1! (threatening ♔d8 mate) 20...♔xc7?! 21 ♖b1 ♔xc4 22 ♖xb7+! ♔xb7 23 ♔d7+ ♔a8 24 ♔c8+ ♔a7 25 c6+ ♔c5 26 ♔b7 mate. In this line 20...♔xc5 is the only chance to survive, but after 21 ♘xe5 fxe5 22 ♘d3 ♔b5 23 ♔xc5 White is still on top.

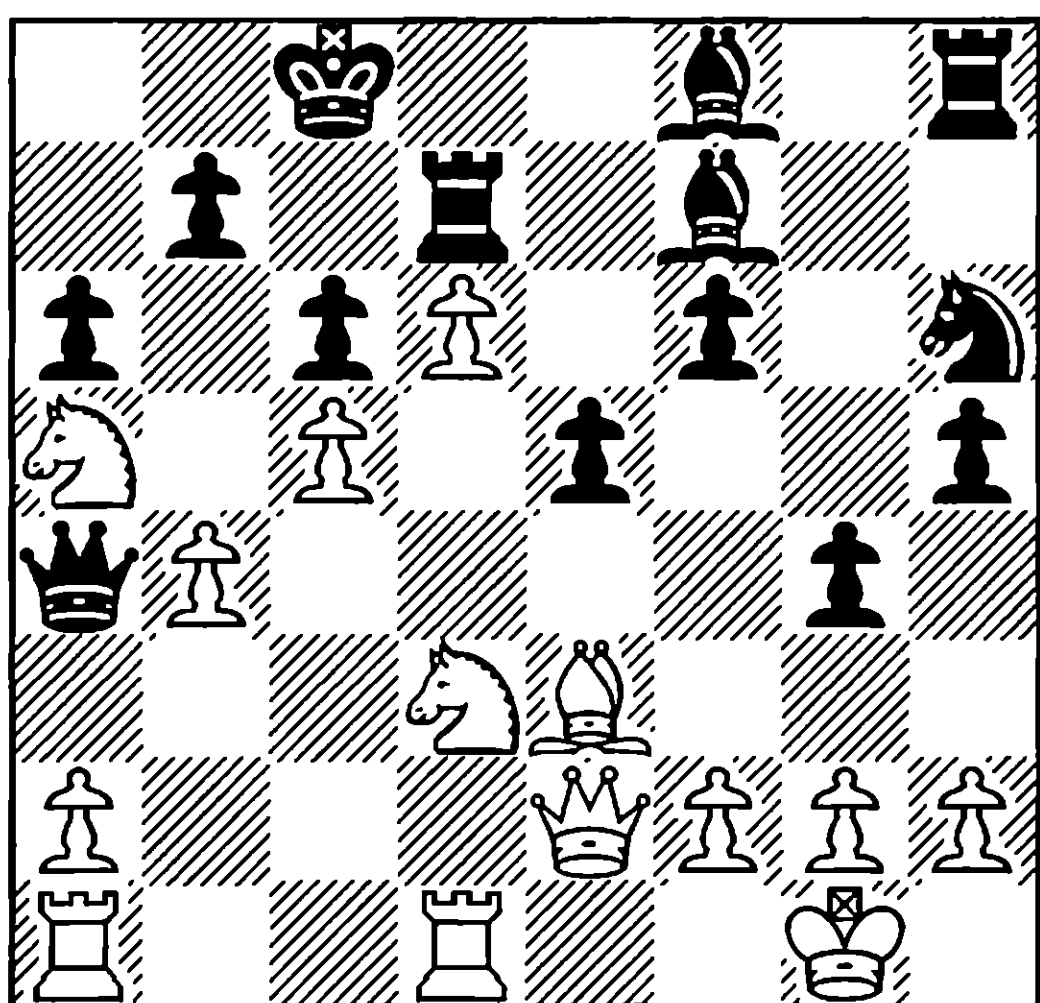
19 ♘a5

Now the big threat is c5-c6, wrecking Black's fragile-looking pawn shield. For instance, 19...♙xb4 20 c6! ♔xa5 (or 20...♖xd6 21 cxb7+ ♔b8 22 ♖ab1 ♔xa5 23 ♔a7+ ♔xa7 24 b8♔ mate) 21 cxd7+ ♔xd7 22 dxc7+ ♔xc7 23 ♖ab1 winning.

19...c6

Short forcibly prevents c5-c6 and hopes that the weakening of the dark squares will not prove too serious, but Black's occupation of the c6-square has consequences which soon become clear.

20 ♘d3

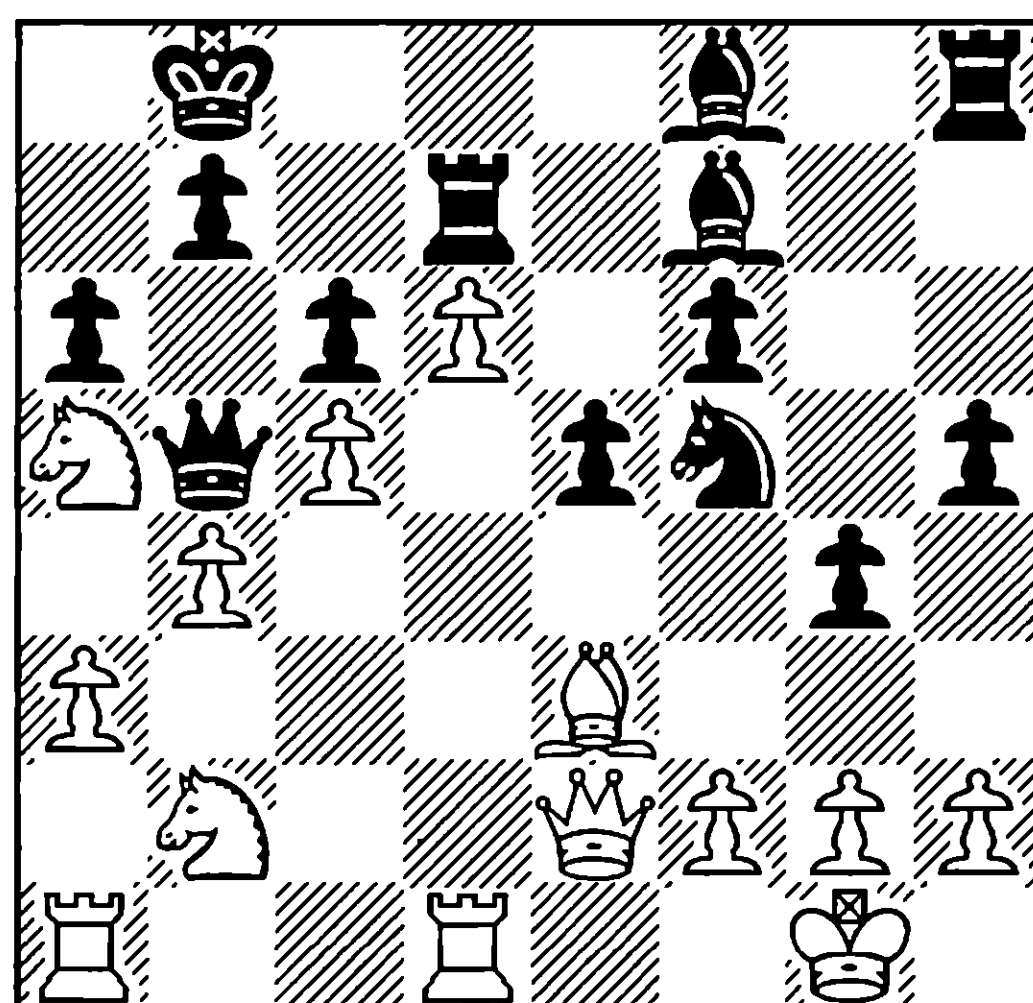


It is officially time for White to consider cashing in his chips. The attack on the king has stalled due to Black making strenuous efforts to close the position – but in doing so he has presented White with another option: of ignoring the attack and instead finding a way to trap the black queen that is cut off from a safe retreating square.

20...♘f5 21 a3

A nice and easy approach. Once the advantage has been established Timman does not look for a flashy win but just makes sure the black queen is not going anywhere.

21...♔b8 22 ♘b2 ♔b5



23 ♔e1

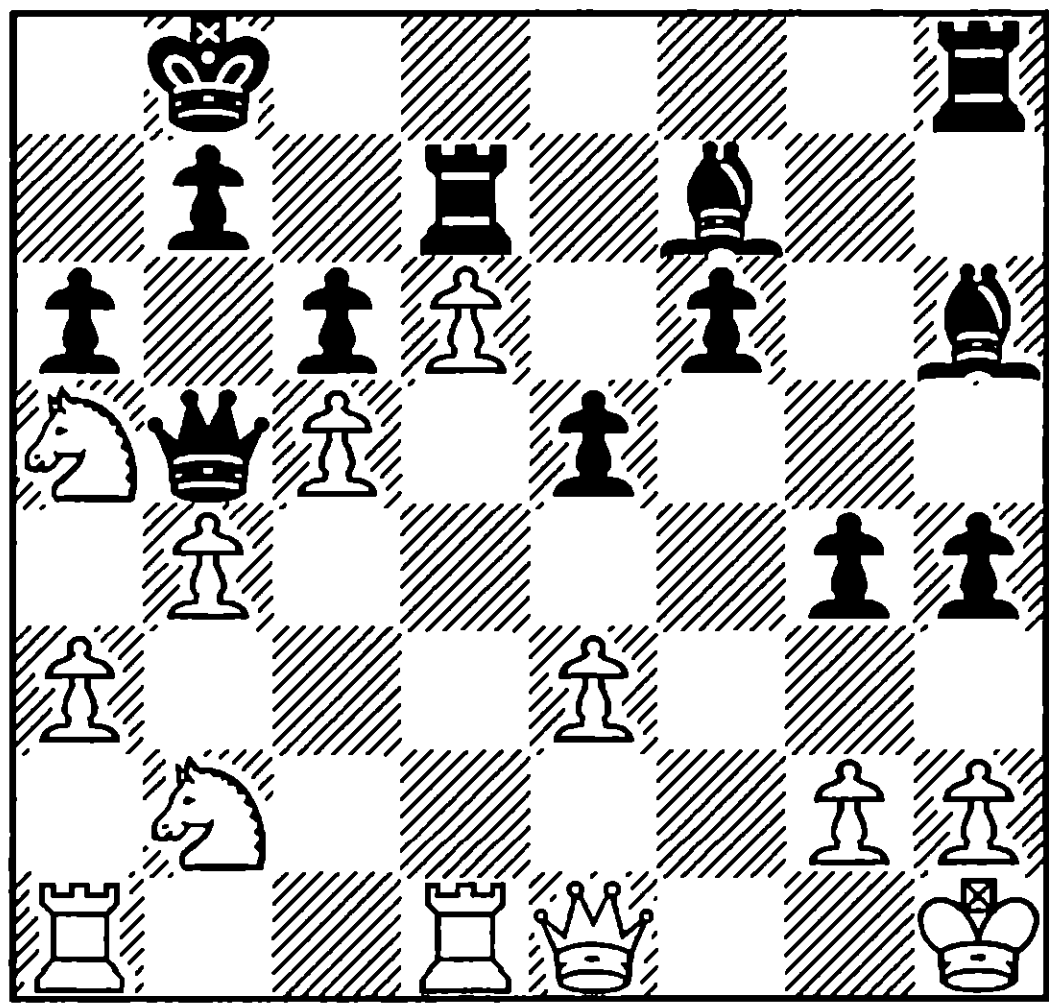
Rather than making do with a favourable ending (due to passed pawn on d6) by exchanging queens, White goes after the big prize – the black queen.

23...♘xe3 24 fxe3 ♔h6 25 ♔h1

There is no rush, so Timman makes extra sure that Black cannot cause any trouble. The immediate 25 a4 would allow Black to try 25...♔xe3+ 26 ♔h1

♙f2, although after 27 ♜d2 ♙e3 28 axb5 ♙xd2 29 ♖xd2 cxb5 he would surely have to concede defeat sooner rather than later.

25...h4



26 a4

At last White chooses the ultimate moment to trap the queen, and suddenly it all becomes rather embarrassing for Black.

26...♙xa5 27 bxa5 g3 28 h3 ♙g5 29 ♘d3 ♙a8 30 ♖ab1 ♖e8 31 ♖b6 ♙d5 32 e4 1-0

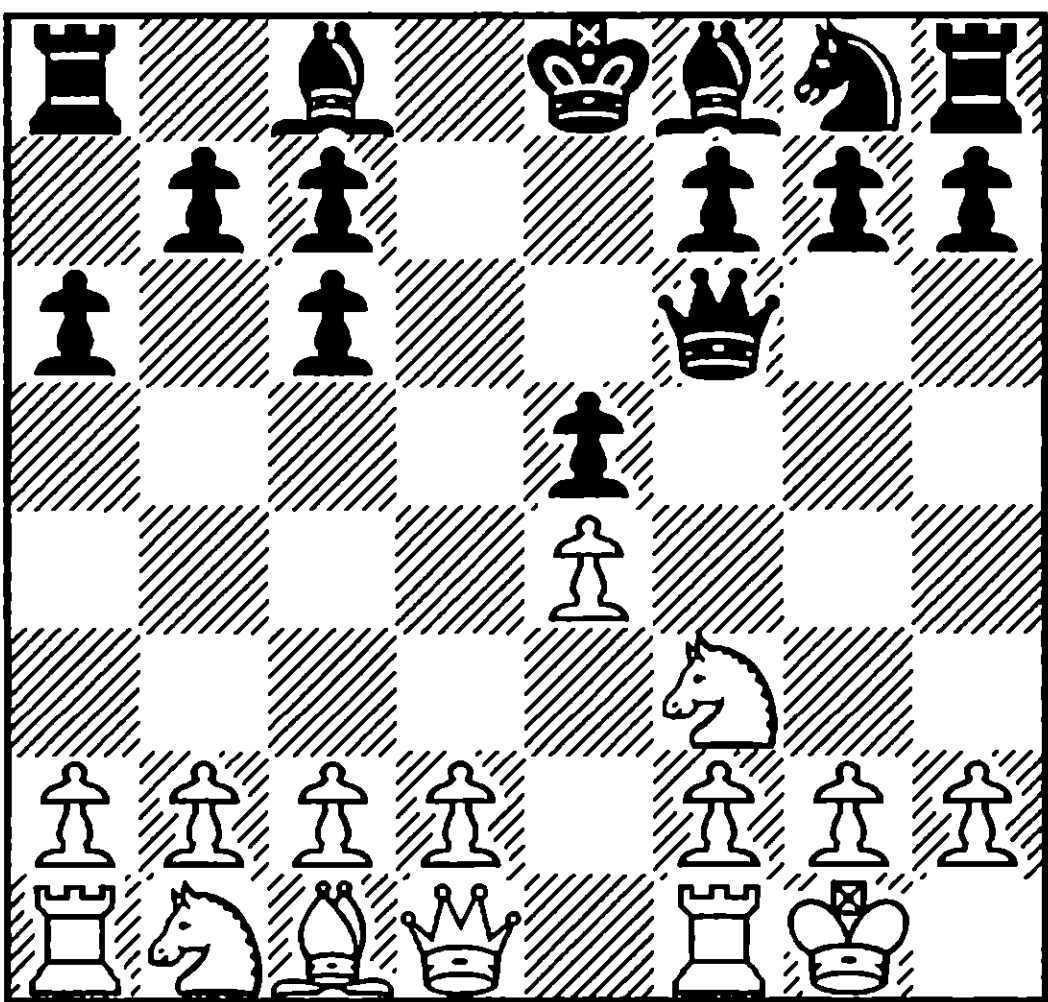
“A pair of bishops is a pair of bishops, but a queen is a queen.” – Nigel Short, as he shook hands after the game.

The attractions of the Ruy Lopez Exchange are becoming apparent to more and more players, because they are fed up of trying to memorize the long variations associated with the main lines, and the Exchange allows White to dictate his opening on move four. There might well be a tendency towards a draw in some variations, but

Black often has to endure a dour struggle. In the following game White creates a sensation in the opening but is ready, at the first opportunity, to give up his attacking bravado and cash in his chips to reach a winning ending:

Game 32
D.Jakovenko-E.Inarkiev
World Rapid Cup, Odessa 2010
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙xc6 dxc6 5 0-0 ♙f6!?

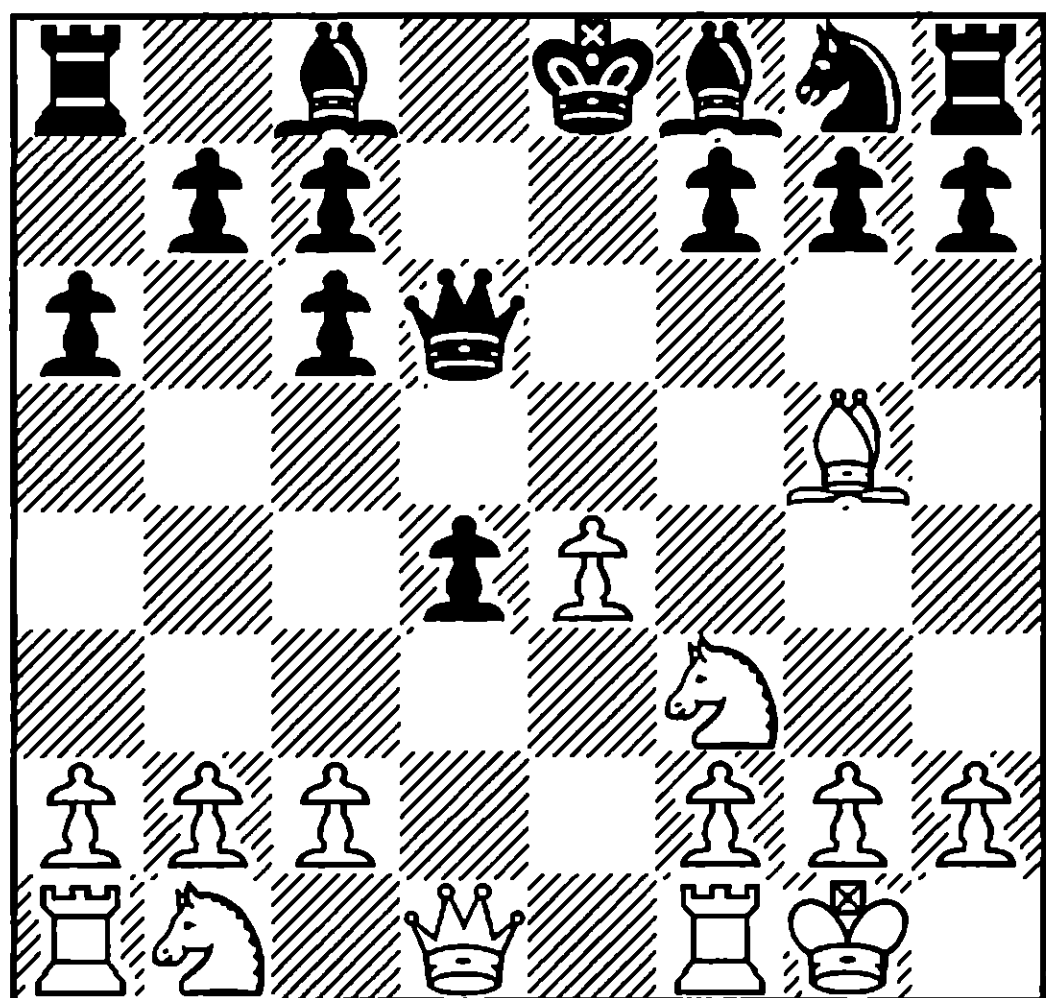


This is the latest fashion and has similar aims to the previous game's 5...♙d6. In my old books on the Exchange 5...♙f6 barely merits a mention, apart from a brief reference to an old game E.Schalopp-M.Harmonist, Frankfurt 1887. Nowadays, on the other hand, the list of those who have ventured it looks like a who's who of top players: Adams, Beliavsky, Carlsen, Ivanchuk, Mamedyarov, Morozevich, Sokolov, Tkachiev...

6 d4 exd4 7 ♖g5 ♗d6!

Morozevich's idea, and the reason why 5...♗f6 has been revived. The argument is that in lines with 5...♗d6 Black is not afraid of a quick 6 d4 because the endgame resulting from 6...exd4 7 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 8 ♘xd4 ♙d7 is equal, so he prepares to do the same here, claiming that White's extra move ♙c1-g5 makes little difference.

The old style focused on 7...♗g6, when 8 ♗xd4 gave White a good position because it is easy from him to develop, whereas the black queen is awkwardly placed on g6. For instance, after the usual 8...♙d6, I would suggest 9 ♔e1! followed by developing the queen's knight and then advancing the e-pawn to create the maximum amount of pressure in the opening.



8 ♘xd4

White wisely chooses to preserve his queen by taking with the knight. The added bonus of his play so far is that his opponent's queenside castling has been temporarily prevented by the bishop on g5.

8...♙d7!

Getting ready nevertheless to castle queenside. However, the fact that Magnus Carlsen has twice preferred 8...♙e7 is an indication that this might well be the right course of action.

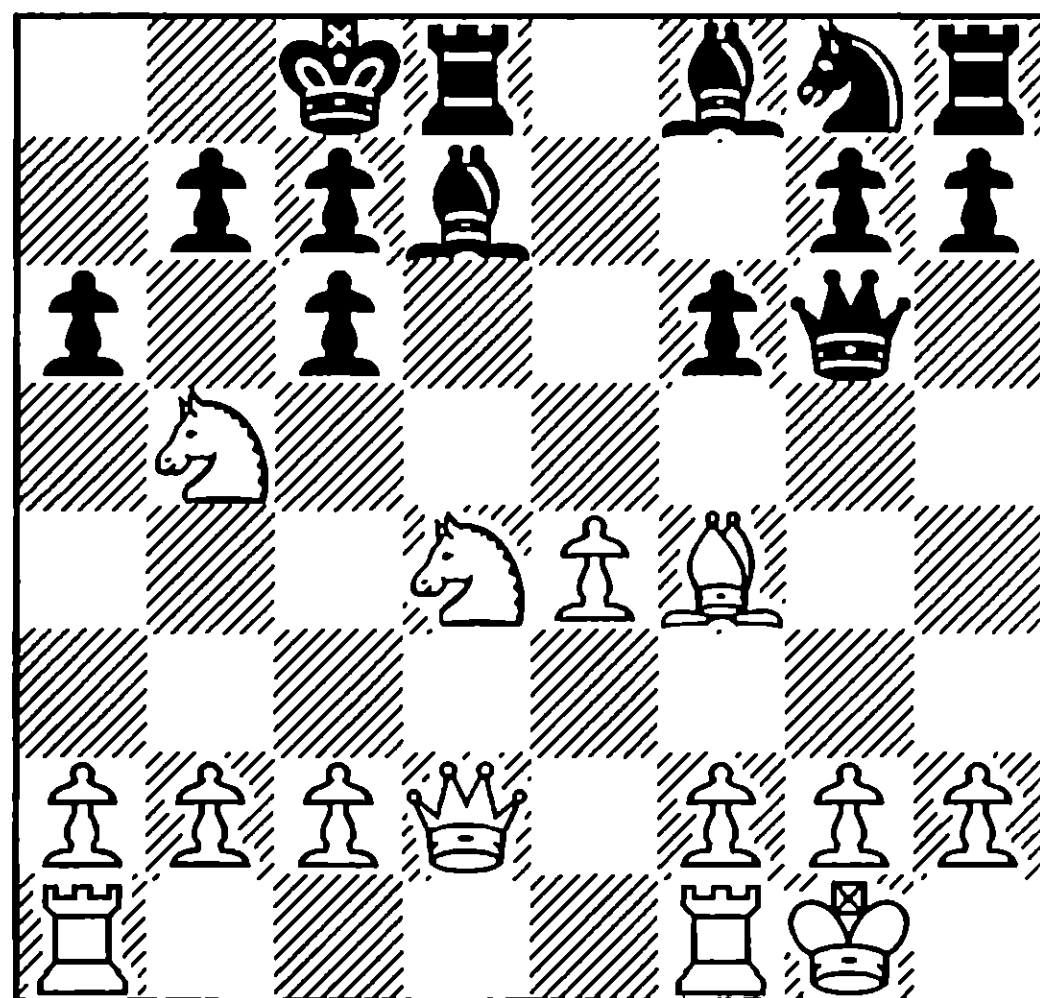
9 ♘c3 ♗g6 10 ♗d2

The queen is usefully placed on d2 where, apart from protecting the bishop, it helps to connect the rooks.

10...f6?!

Inarkiev is busy following the path laid down by another game and blocks the bishop in preparation for queenside castling. The downside is that it also locks in the black queen, preventing it from swinging across to the queenside in time of need. Instead, in T.Radjabov-S.Mamedyarov, Astrakhan 2010, Black tried 10...♙e7 after all, when 11 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 12 ♔ad1 0-0-0 13 ♗e3 gave White a slight edge.

11 ♙f4 0-0-0 12 ♘cb5!!



A difficult and bold move which transforms the position. White gives up a piece as a prelude to his queen joining in the attack. There are a few clues

to the success of this combination: that White has a majority of pieces in place to create threats against the weak c7-point and, crucially, the black queen on g6 is a mere spectator to the proceedings on the other wing. Of course such a combination can only be made with exact calculation, otherwise a potential brilliancy can quickly turn into a disaster and you are just a piece down.

Inarkiev must have been in total shock, especially if he was expecting something similar to the game M.Socko-A.Stefanova, Beijing (blitz) 2008, which saw 12 ♖g3 c5 13 ♘f3 ♙b5 14 ♚f4 ♙d6 15 e5 fxe5 16 ♘xe5, when 16...♙xf1 17 ♘xg6 ♙xf4 18 ♘xh8 ♙xg3 19 hxg3 ♙c4 would have been good for Black.

12...cxb5

Black accepts the sacrifice and invites an attack. The alternatives reveal that the knight sacrifice is both sound and very dangerous:

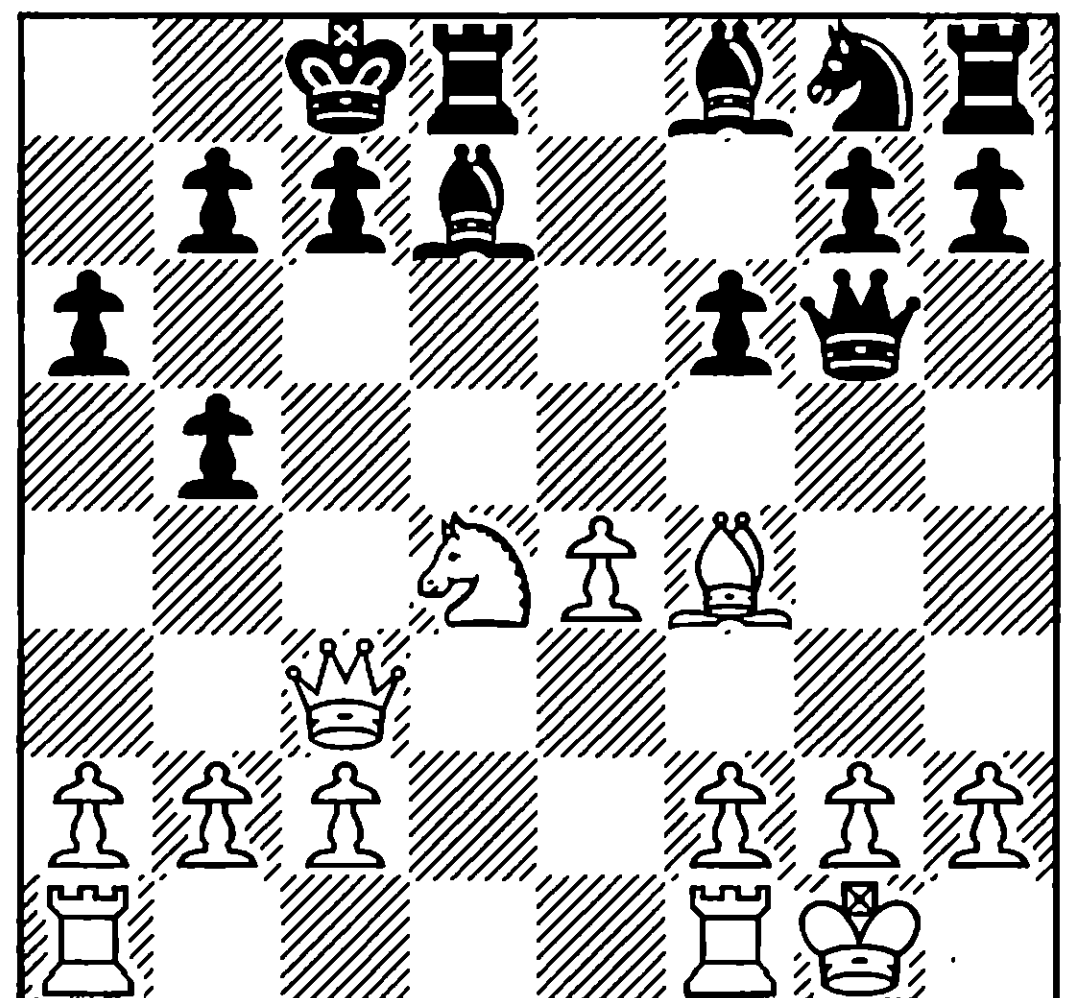
a) 12...axb5? 13 ♚a5! triumphs instantly, as Black do nothing about the twin threats of ♚a8 mate and ♚xc7 mate.

b) 12...♙c5? also allows a pretty finish: 13 ♚a5! ♙b6 14 ♚xb6! cxb6 15 ♘a7 mate.

c) 12...♙h3?! attempts to give the king an escape square on d7 and threatens mate himself, but White hits back with 13 ♘a7+! ♙d7 (13...♙b8? allows a forced mate: 14 ♘dxc6+! bxc6 15 ♚xd8+ ♙xa7 16 ♚xc7+ ♙a8 17 ♚b8 mate) 14 ♙g3 (blocking the threat

against g2) 14...♙e8 15 ♚c3 ♙d7 16 ♙xc7 and White is clearly on top.

13 ♚c3!

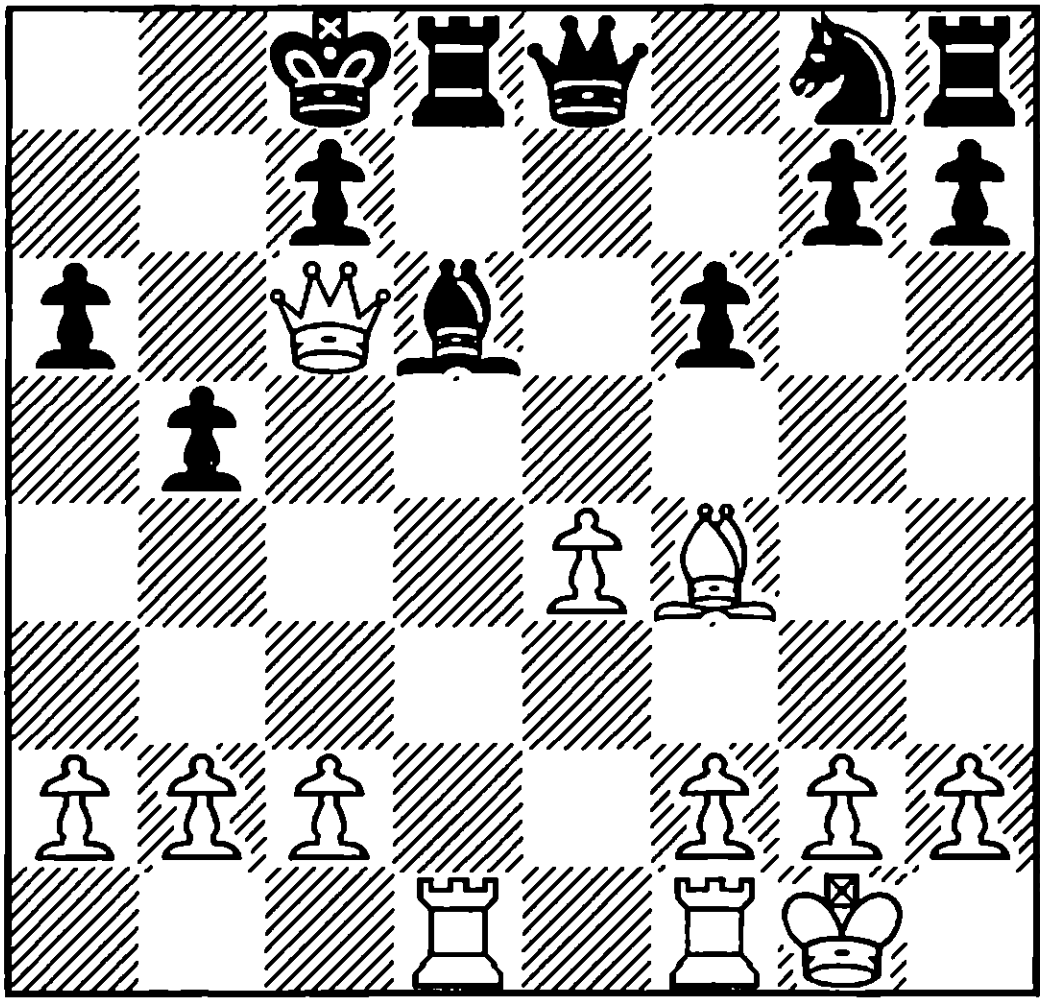


noticing that 15...♖d7? allows 16 ♕a8 mate.

16 ♖ad1

After the inspiring knight sacrifice it can be reported that Black is now totally lost. His fragile king position, coupled with White's tactical tricks, mean there is no escape route.

16...♕e8



What else?

a) 16...♕xf4 allows 17 ♕a8 mate.

b) 16...♗e7 17 ♕xa6+ ♖d7 18 ♕xd6 cxd6 19 ♖xd6+ ♖e8 20 ♕xb5+ ♖f7 21 ♕b3+ ♖e8 22 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23 ♕b8+ ♗c8 24 ♖d1+ ♖e7 25 ♕c7+ and White is winning easily.

c) 16...♖b8 17 ♖xd6! cxd6 18 ♕xd6+ ♖xd6 19 ♕xd6+ ♖b7 20 ♕d7+ ♖b6 21 ♖d1 will quickly lead to mate.

17 ♖xd6

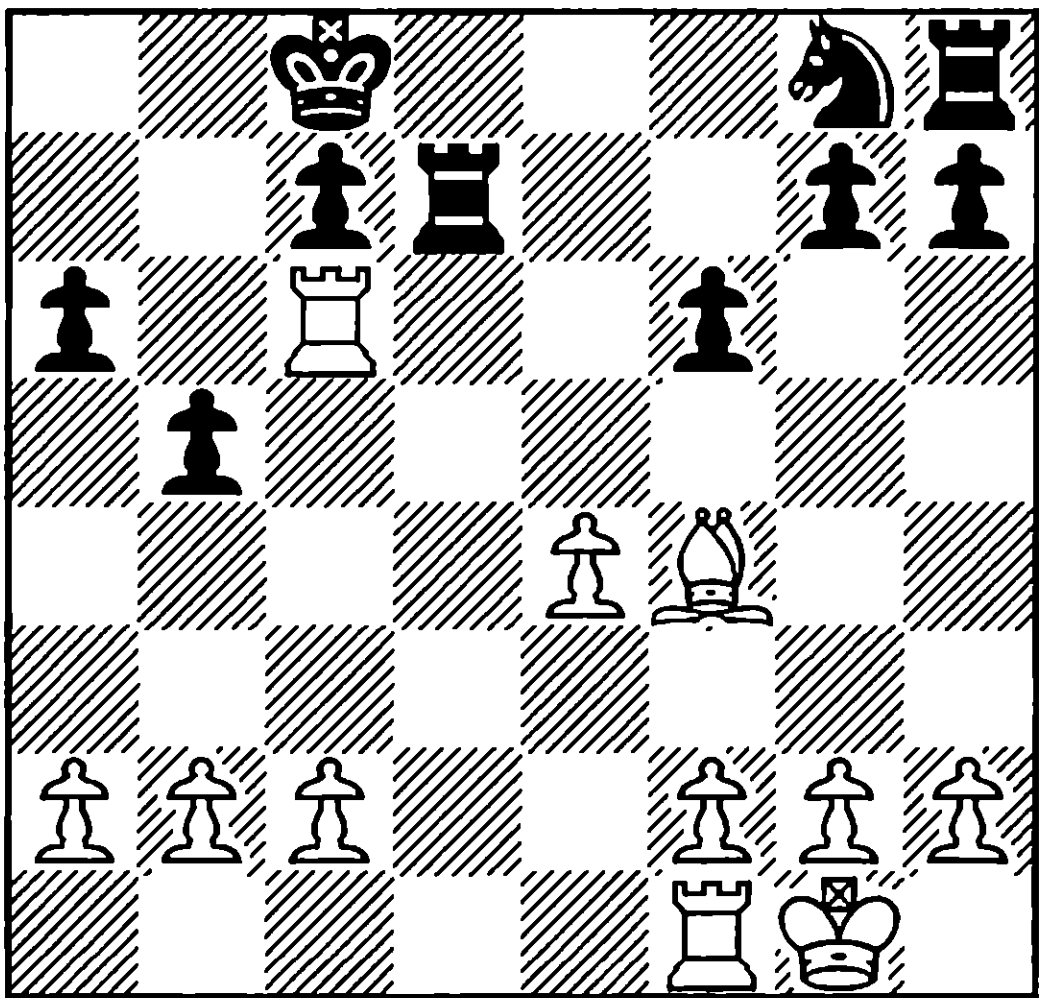
White decides to cash in his chips. He spots a winning line that presents him with two extra pawns in the ending and goes for it, even if he has to give up the thrill of attack – a sensible, practical decision, especially in a rapid game.

With more time on the clock he might have noticed he could have wrapped up the game a little quicker – here the computer suggests 17 ♕xa6+!? ♖b8 and now the quiet move 18 ♕e3!, which is incredibly strong because it sets up a series of mating threats. For instance:

a) 18...♕e6 19 ♕a7+ ♖a8 20 ♕b6+ ♖b8 21 ♖d5! (an absolute star move which actually allows the bishop to be taken in return for a decisive attack) 21...cxb6 22 ♕xb6+ ♖c8 23 ♕c6+ ♖b8 24 ♖xb5+ ♖a7 25 ♕b7 mate.

b) 18...♗e7 19 ♕a7+ ♖a8 20 ♕b6+ ♖b8 21 ♕a7+ ♖c8 22 ♖xd6! when the rook cannot be taken in view of the threat to mate on c7.

17...♕xc6 18 ♖xc6 ♖d7

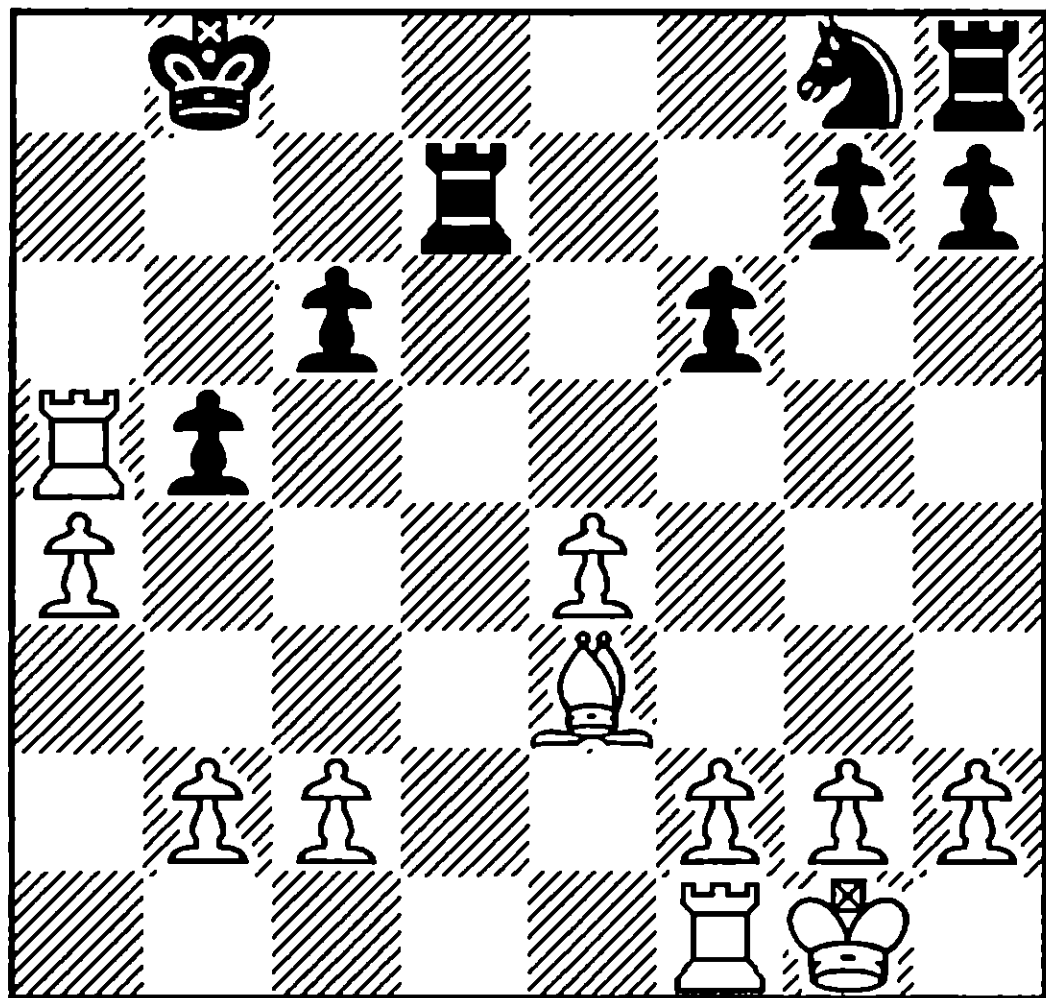


19 ♖xa6

It is time for Black to count the pawns. There are two reasons why he would carry on against a top grandmaster in such hopeless circumstances. The first one is that with fast time-limits you never know that a shock might happen if White becomes care-

less; but more likely, after the remarkable 12 ♖cb5, Black knew that a nineteen move miniature would end up being published around the world. Well, the ruse almost worked.

19...♙b7 20 ♖a5 c6 21 ♙e3 ♙b8 22 a4



When acting as a coach I have seen dozens of junior games where the player with the extra pawns fails to convert the advantage. In this case White is doing all the right things by exchanging queenside pawns: eventually he will be able to produce at least one passed pawn, which will tie up the black pieces by the need to defend against its progress.

22...b4 23 ♙c5 ♘h6 24 ♙xb4 ♖d4 25 ♙c3 ♖xe4 26 ♖d1

It is worth remembering that you can still attack in just about any ending, so Jakovenko activates his pieces, and if Black starts to play passively, he can seek to double his rooks on the seventh rank.

26...♖he8 27 h3

There is no rush – even top players take a time out to give the king an es-

cape square, in order to avoid any back rank mating tricks.

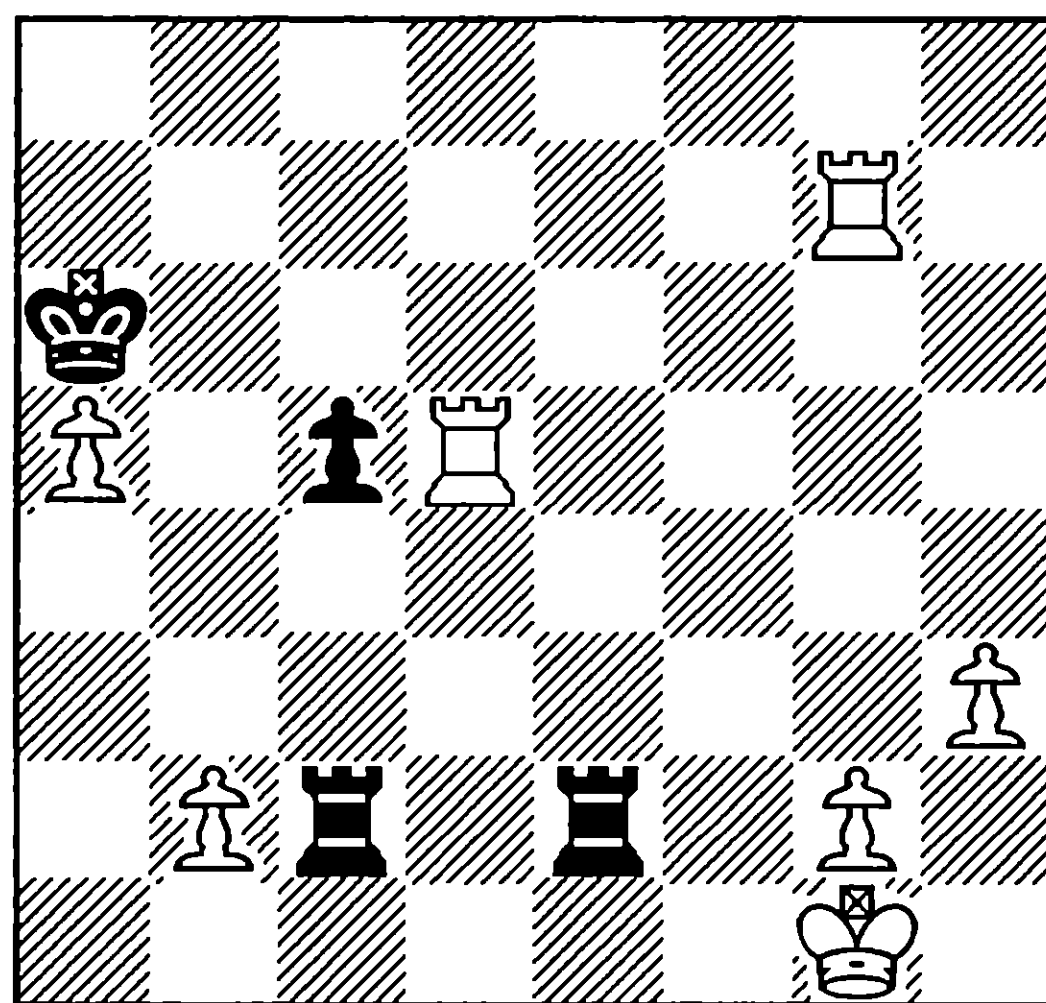
27...♖4e7 28 ♖h5

Thwarted from putting a rook on the seventh rank by Black's previous move, White sets about another target. Now the idea is 29 ♙xf6 gxf6 30 ♖xh6.

28...♘f7 29 ♖xh7 ♘g5 30 ♖h4 ♖e2 31 ♖b4+ ♙c7 32 ♖bd4 ♖xc2 33 ♖d7+ ♙b6 34 a5+ ♙a6 35 ♖xg7

Yes, the advantage really is three pawns now, but Black keeps going.

35...♖ee2 36 ♙xf6 ♘e4 37 ♙d4 c5 38 ♙e3 ♘xf2 39 ♙xf2 ♖xf2 40 ♖d5 ♖fe2



Black's vague tricks and hopes are running out. Although his rooks have reached the second rank, their influence is minimal with White keeping guard on his g-pawn. Furthermore, the black king is very exposed which allows White to ease the game towards a favourable finish.

41 b4! cxb4 42 ♖g6+ ♙b7

Things also look bleak after 42...♙a7 43 ♖d7+ ♙b8 44 a6 and Black runs a big risk of being mated.

43 ♖b5+ ♙c7 44 ♖xb4 1-0

"I knew that such a trap existed. Otherwise I would have never found it."

Russian grandmaster Dmitri Jakovenko after the game.

The idea of cashing in your chips is essential to even the most talented attacking players. It can still include the things we have discussed in past chapters such as *count the pieces* to evaluate an attack and *history always repeats* to find a mating pattern or opening trick. In the following game White goes for it straight out of the opening, but still knows when to draw a line under the attack and seek material gain.

"I like to regard chess as an analytical problem with a definite existing solution." – Alexander Khalifman.

"Chess is a game of plastic pieces." – Gary Lane.

Two reported quotes but guess which one is the Russian grandmaster?

Game 33 **A.Khalifman-K.Arkel** Leningrad 1989 *Caro-Kann Defence*

1 e4 c6

The starting point of the Caro-Kann Defence. It is named in honour of the English player Horatio Caro (1862-1920) and the Austrian Marcus Kann (1820-86) who recommended this line

in the magazine *Brüderschaft*. It was only later that interest picked up when it was adopted by Nimzowitsch and Capablanca. It is now recognized as one of the most popular replies to 1 e4.

2 d4 d5

The Caro-Kann is similar to the French Defence (1...e6 and 2...d5) in that the centre is challenged by playing a pawn to d5 on the second move, which effectively issues a challenge to White on what to do next. In response White can advance, defend or exchange or even gambit the e-pawn. You will sometimes hear Caro-Kann players arguing that their opening is better than the French on the basis that the light-squared bishop is not locked in behind a pawn on e6. Naturally both openings have their merits.

3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♞d7 5 ♞g5

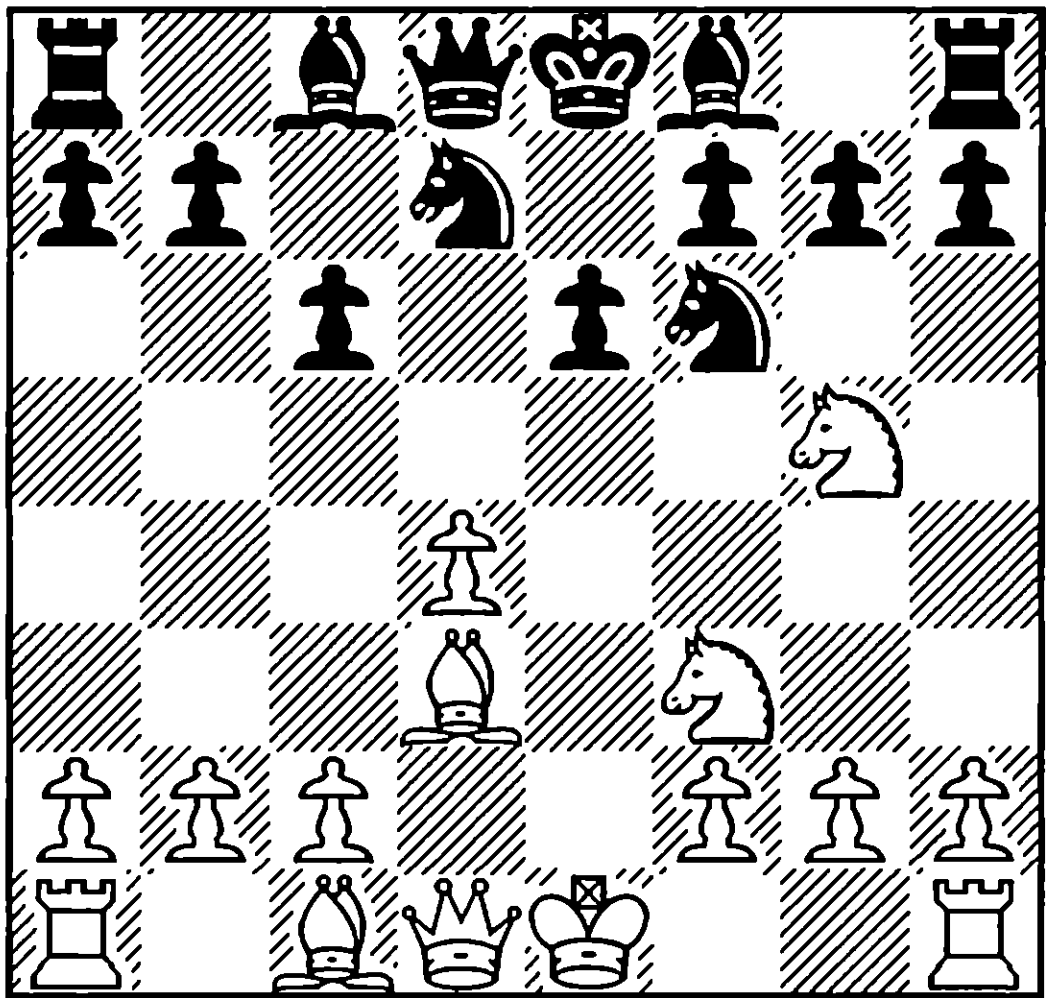
An established variation, in which White hopes to exert pressure on f7 and try to keep the black pieces passive. The perfect choice for rapid games or the internet is 5 ♛e2! – in the hope of 5...♞gf6?? 6 ♞d6 mate(!) which has certainly occurred in a number of tournament games.

5...♞gf6 6 ♚d3 e6

In A.Tzermiadianos-A.Ovezov, Elista Olympiad 1998, Black tried to shoo away the knight with 6...h6 and was no doubt shocked to see 7 ♞e6! appear on the board. The game continued 7...♛a5+ (7...fxe6?? allows 8 ♚g6 mate) 8 ♚d2 ♛b6 9 ♞xf8 ♞xf8 10 ♞f3 (10 ♚c3 is also worth a try if you want to

preserve the b pawn) 10...♙xb2 11 0 0 ♘e6 12 ♖b1 ♙xa2 13 c4 c5 14 d5 ♘g5 15 ♘xg5 hxg5 16 ♙xg5 and White had strong play for the sacrificed pawn.

7 ♘1f3



7...♙e7

Black is just getting on with the job of developing his kingside pieces in preparation for castling.

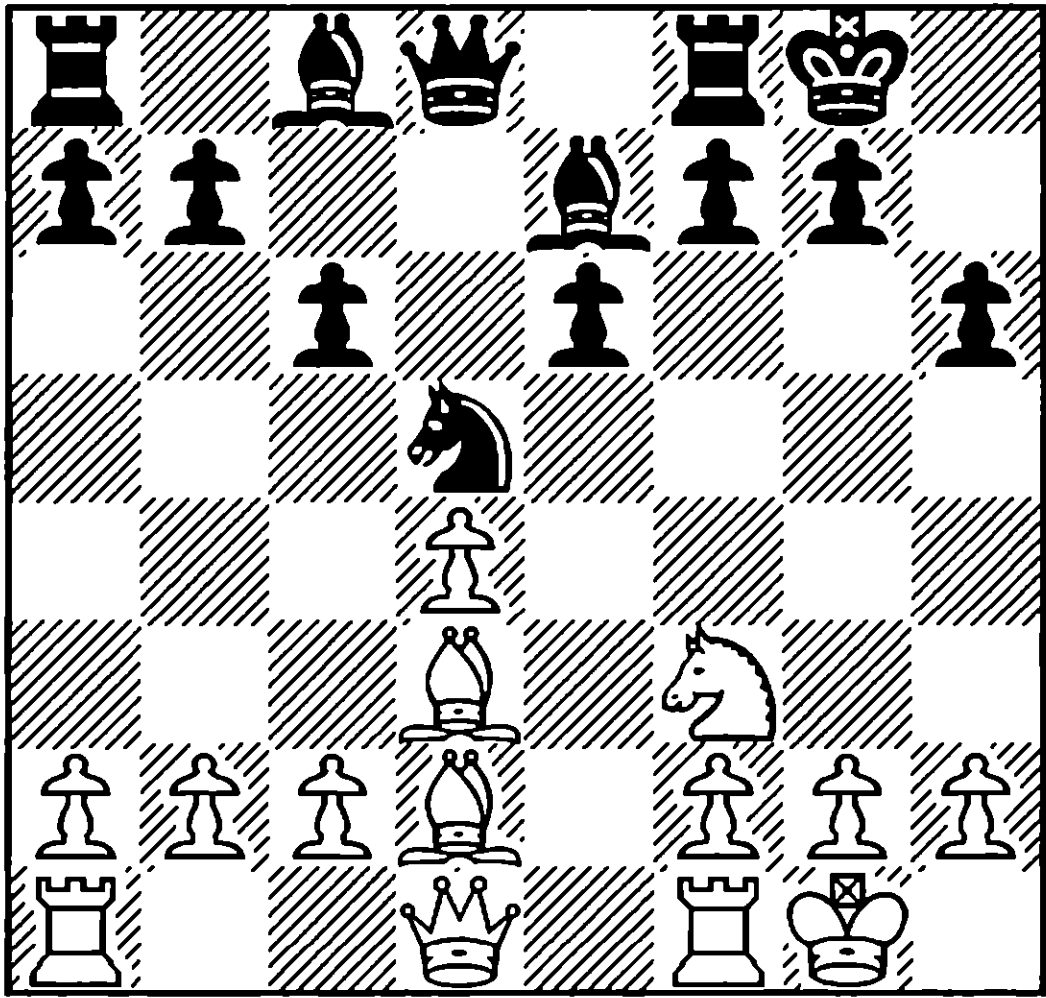
7...♙d6 is a slightly more active line, which I have some experience of playing against. For instance: 8 ♙e2 (setting up a trap for the unwary) 8...h6 (after 8...♙c7? White's sneaky surprise works wonders: 9 ♘xf7! ♙xf7 10 ♘g5+ ♙e8 11 ♙xe6+ ♙e7 12 ♙f7+ ♙d8 13 ♘e6 mate) 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 10 ♙xe4 ♙c7 11 ♙g4 ♙g8!? (11...♙f8 has also been tested, when 12 0-0 gives White the edge) 12 ♘d2 (or 12 ♙xh6!? ♘f6 13 ♙g5 ♘d5! and both sides have chances in the complications) 12...♘f6 13 ♙f3 e5 14 dxe5 ♙xe5 15 ♘c4 ♙e6 16 ♘xe5 (16 ♙d2!? is preferred by Kasparov) 16...♙xe5+ 17 ♙e3 ♘g4 led to an equal ending in G.Lane-L.Patriarca, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

Black needs to be careful at this early stage not to fall for 7...h6?, since 8 ♘xe6! presents White with a wonderful long-term attacking game. For example, 8...♙e7 9 0-0 fxe6 10 ♙g6+ ♙d8 11 ♙f4 eventually led to shock defeat for the World Champion against a computer in the game Deep Blue G.Kasparov, New York (6th match game) 1997.

8 0-0 h6 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 10 ♙xe4 ♘f6!?

10...c5 is the main alternative.

11 ♙d3 0-0 12 ♙f4 ♘d5 13 ♙d2



13...c5

The Englishman strikes out at the centre and aims to free his passive-looking position.

14 dxc5 ♙xc5 15 ♙e2

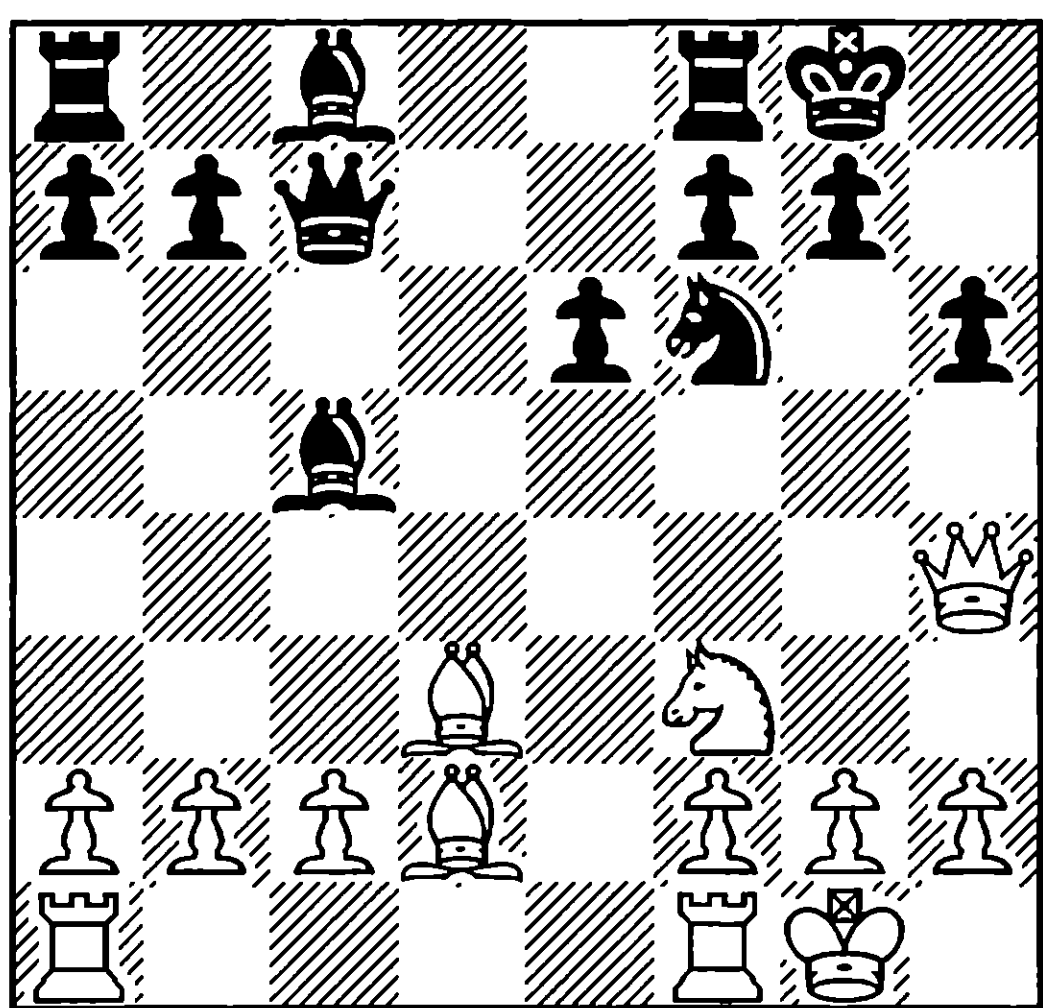
White's game is preferable because his pieces have harmony, whereas Black still has to develop his light-squared bishop.

15...♙c7 16 ♙e4! ♘f6

Black defends against the mating threat on h7 in what seems the safest way. Instead 16...f5 would be met by 17 ♙e2 with a view to establishing a

knight on e5 now there is no pawn to oust it with ...f7 f6. For example, 17...♔d7 (or 17...♙f4 18 ♔xf4 ♚xf4 19 ♔c4 ♚f6 20 ♚ad1 with the advantage since Black has yet to complete his queenside development) 18 ♘e5 ♔e8 19 ♚ad1 and although chances are roughly even, I think the position is easier for White in practical play, because his pieces are better coordinated.

17 ♚h4



The preparation for the attack has taken place and as usual one can use the simple method of *count the pieces* to see that White's prospects are healthy. After all it is four vs. two with White's queen, knight and pair of bishops ready to go on the offensive, whereas Black has only the knight and rook to rely upon.

17...♔e7 18 ♔xh6!?

Khalifman decides it is time to increase the tension by sacrificing a piece to break through Black's kingside pawn shield. I would add that such a sacrifice is easier to advocate when you can al-

ways bail out with a draw by perpetual check if the onslaught stalls.

18...gxf6 19 ♚xh6 ♚d8

Arkell now has to play incredibly accurately in order to survive, which is a tough ask. That the alternatives are not exactly inspiring for Black indicates how easy it is to go wrong in such a position:

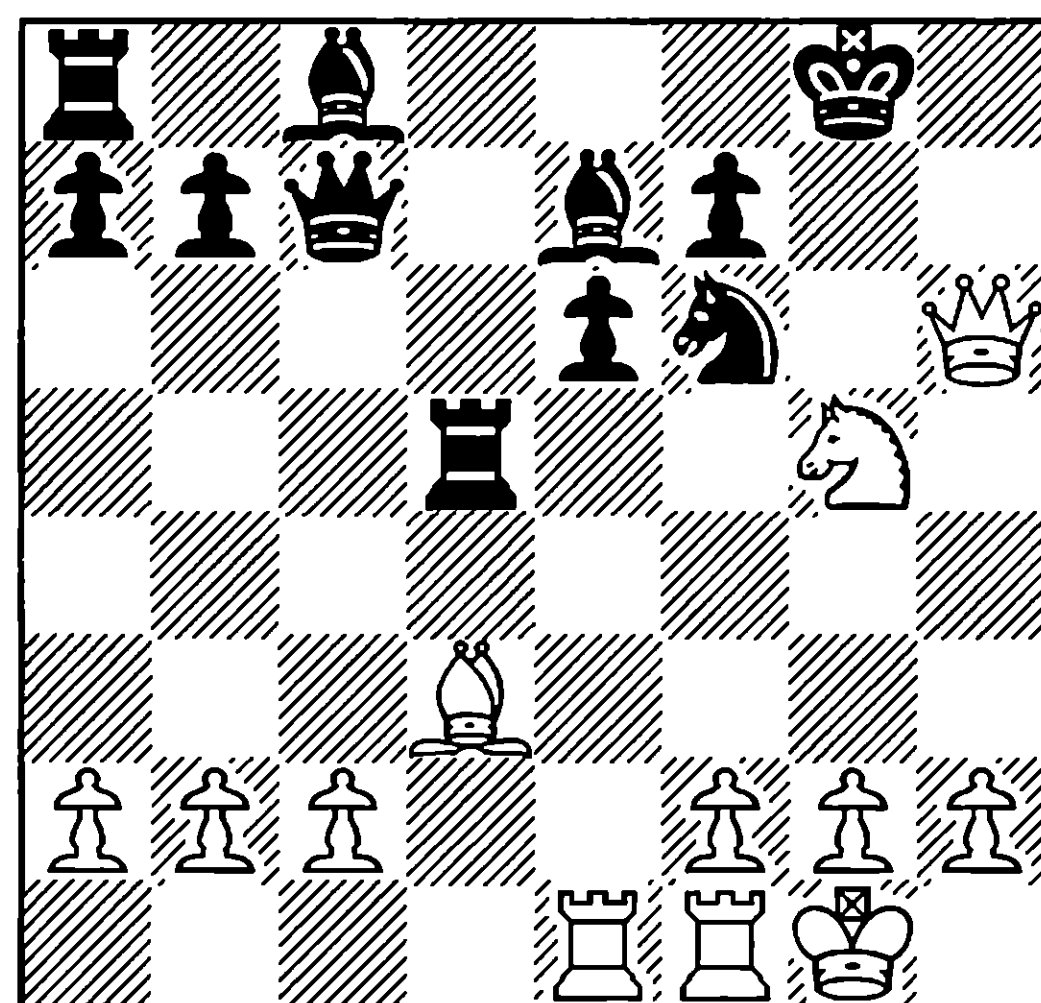
a) 19...e5? 20 ♚fe1 e4 21 ♚xe4! ♘xe4 22 ♔xe4 f5 23 ♔d5+ ♚f7 24 ♚g6+ and wins.

b) 19...♚c5 20 ♘g5! ♔d7 21 ♚ae1 (21 ♔h7+ ♔h8 22 ♔g6+ ♔g8 23 ♘e4! is also strong) 21...♔b5 22 ♔h7+ ♔h8 23 ♔e4+ ♔g8 24 ♚e3, intending to swing across a rook to the kingside with an easy victory in sight.

20 ♚ae1 ♚d5

It is too late to develop the queen's bishop by 20...b6 in view of 21 ♚e5! (intending to transfer the rook to the g5-square) 21...♚d5 22 ♚xd5 exd5 23 ♘g5, threatening 24 ♔h7+, and Black can resign with honour.

21 ♘g5



21...♚xd3!

The only way for Black to prolong the struggle is by exchanging one of the attacking pieces. Other moves are hopeless:

a) 21...♙f8? 22 ♙h7+ ♔h8 23 ♚xf8+ ♘g8 24 ♚xg8 mate.

b) 21...♖f5 22 ♙xf5 exf5 23 ♖e2 ♚d8 24 ♖fe1 ♙f8 25 ♖e8! ♚d6 26 ♖xf8+ ♚xf8 27 ♚xf6 with a winning advantage.

c) 21...♖xg5 22 ♚xg5+ ♔f8 23 ♚h6+ ♔e8 (23...♔g8 gets stomped on by 24 ♖e3!) 24 ♚h8+ ♔d7 25 ♙b5+ ♔d6 26 ♖e4! with a tremendous attack, since 26...♘xe4? flops to 27 ♚d4 mate.

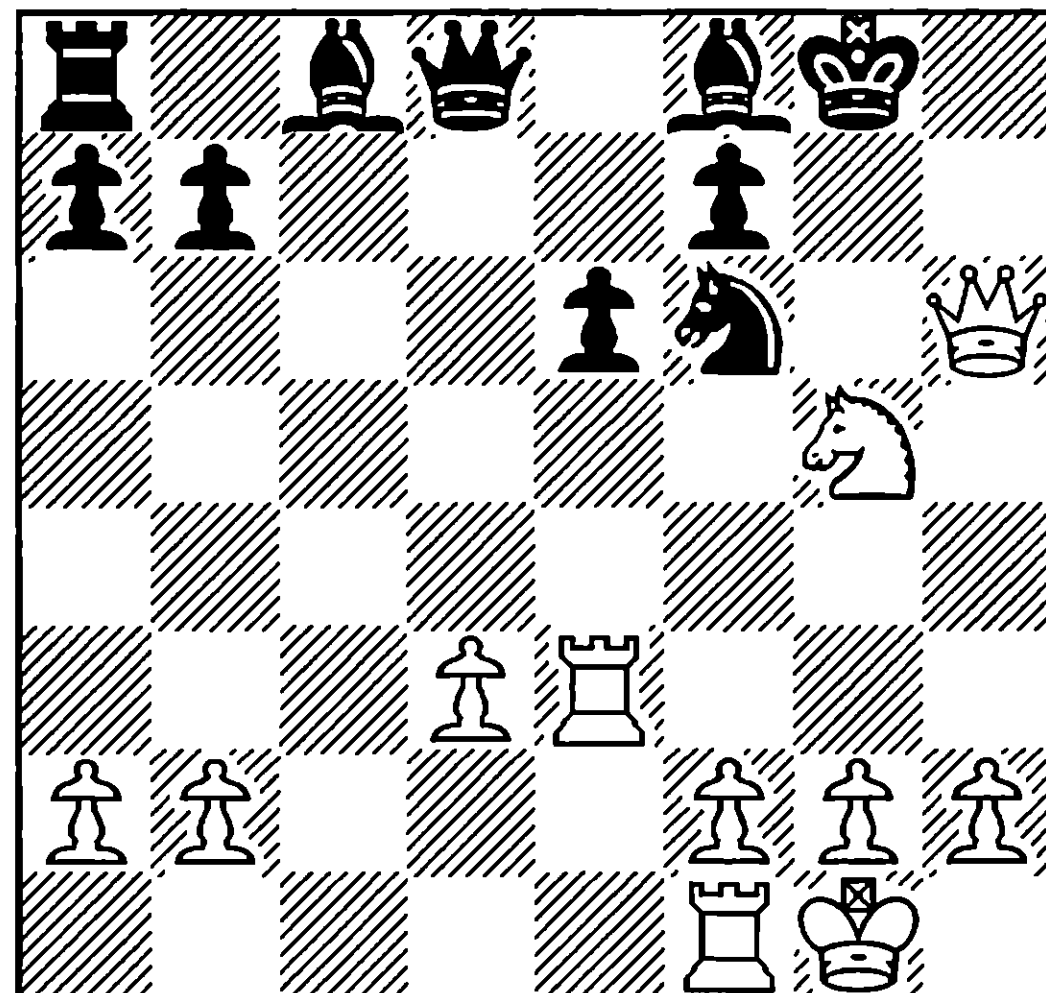
22 cxd3 ♚d8

An understandable reaction; Black protects the knight so that he can shore up the defence with ...♙f8. Instead, Khalifman suggested 22...♚f4 as a better defence, but after 23 ♖e4! (23 ♘xf7 ♚xh6 24 ♘h6+ ♔f8 is far less clear than the game) 23...♚f5 (not 23...♘xe4?? 24 ♚h7+ ♔f8 25 ♚h8 mate) 24 ♖h4 ♘h7! (the only move) 25 ♘h7 (25 f4!? ♚xd3 26 h3 intending ♖f3 also looks scary, but here 26...e5! should ensure equality) 25...♙xh4 26 ♚xh4 ♚xh7 27 ♚d8+ ♔g7 28 ♖c1 e5!? (or 28...♚h5 29 h3! ♚d5 30 ♚e7 ♚d7 31 ♚g5+ ♔f8 32 ♖c4 and the attack is still very strong) 29 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 30 ♚xc8 ♚xd3 31 ♚g4+ ♔f8 32 ♚b4+ ♔g7 33 h3 White has all the chances in the queen endgame.

23 ♖e3 ♙f8

It seems that Black is on the verge of consolidating his defence by posting a

bishop on g7, but White has a small tactical answer. True, 23...♚f8 is not much better in view of 24 ♚h3! e5 25 ♚g3! ♚g7 (or 25...♘g4 26 ♖xe5! ♘xe5 27 ♘e6+ winning the black queen) 26 ♚xe5 ♙f8 27 ♖g3 and wins.



24 ♚h8+!

White decides it is the right time to *cash in his chips*, because the attack cannot be obviously improved and there is a chance to gain further material in the ending.

24...♔xh8 25 ♘xf7+ ♔g8 26 ♘xd8

After the little combination White has emerged with a rook and three pawns for the pair of bishops, and an added factor is that as usual in this game Black's pieces lack harmony.

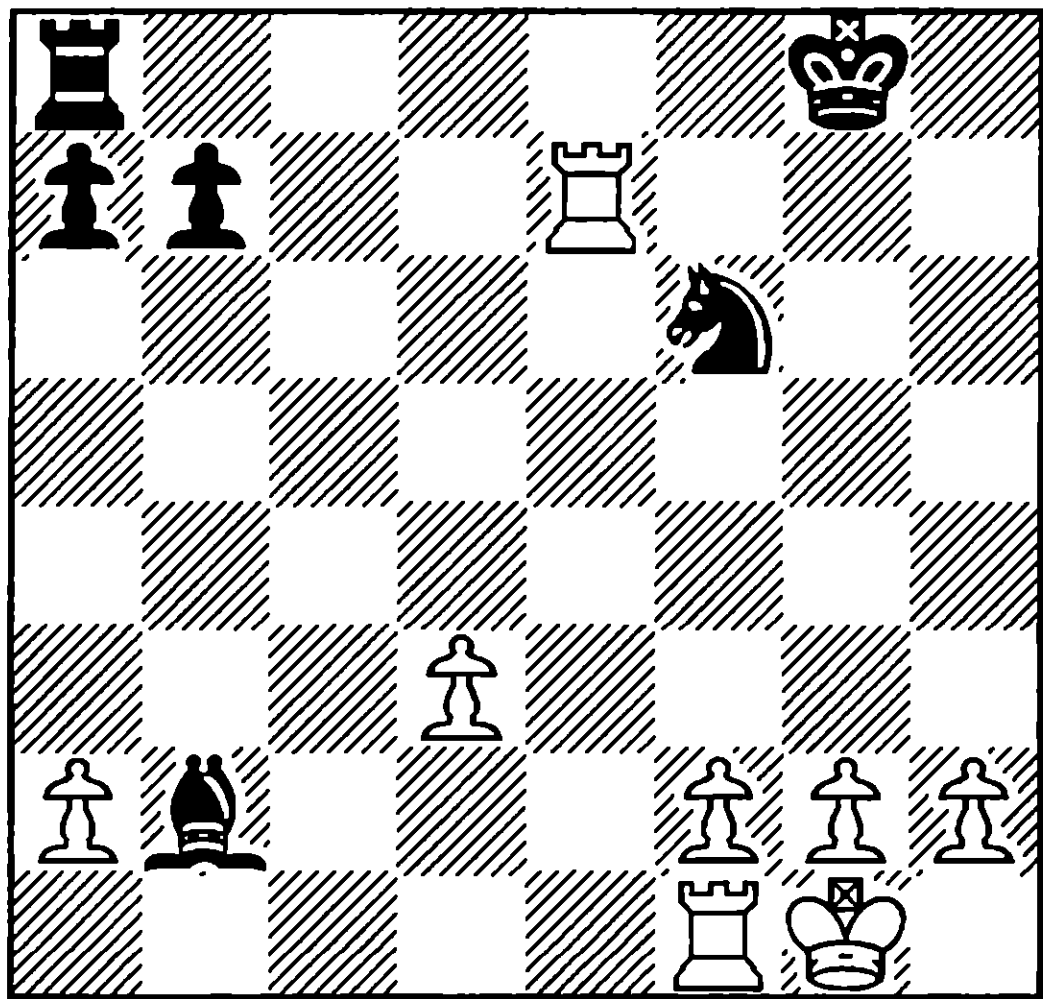
26...♙c5?!

I would prefer 26...♙d6, so that 27 ♘xe6?! can be met by 27...♙xh2+! 28 ♔xh2? ♘g4+ 29 ♔g3 ♘xe3 30 fxe3 ♙xe6 and suddenly Black is better. Admittedly 27 ♖fe1 e5 28 d4! exd4 (or 28...e4 29 ♖b3) 29 ♖f3 ♔g7 30 ♘e6+ ♔g6 31 ♘xd4 favours White, but at least Black still has his two bishops.

27 ♖e2 ♗d4

Or 27...e5 28 ♖xe5 ♗d4 29 ♖g5+ ♔f8 30 ♖e1 ♗xb2 31 h4 and White can shepherd the h-pawn up the board with devastating consequences for Black.

28 ♜xe6 ♞xe6 29 ♞xe6 ♞xb2 30 ♞e7!



In the traditional manner White's rook occupies the seventh rank in order both to restrict the black king and seek out more pawns to take.

30...b5 31 ♞b1 ♞c8 32 ♔f1 ♞d5 33 ♞d7 ♞f6 34 ♞xa7 ♞c2 35 ♞e7 ♞d5 36 ♞e8+ ♔f7 37 ♞be1 ♞f4

37...♞c3 is foiled by the reply 38 ♞8e2!.

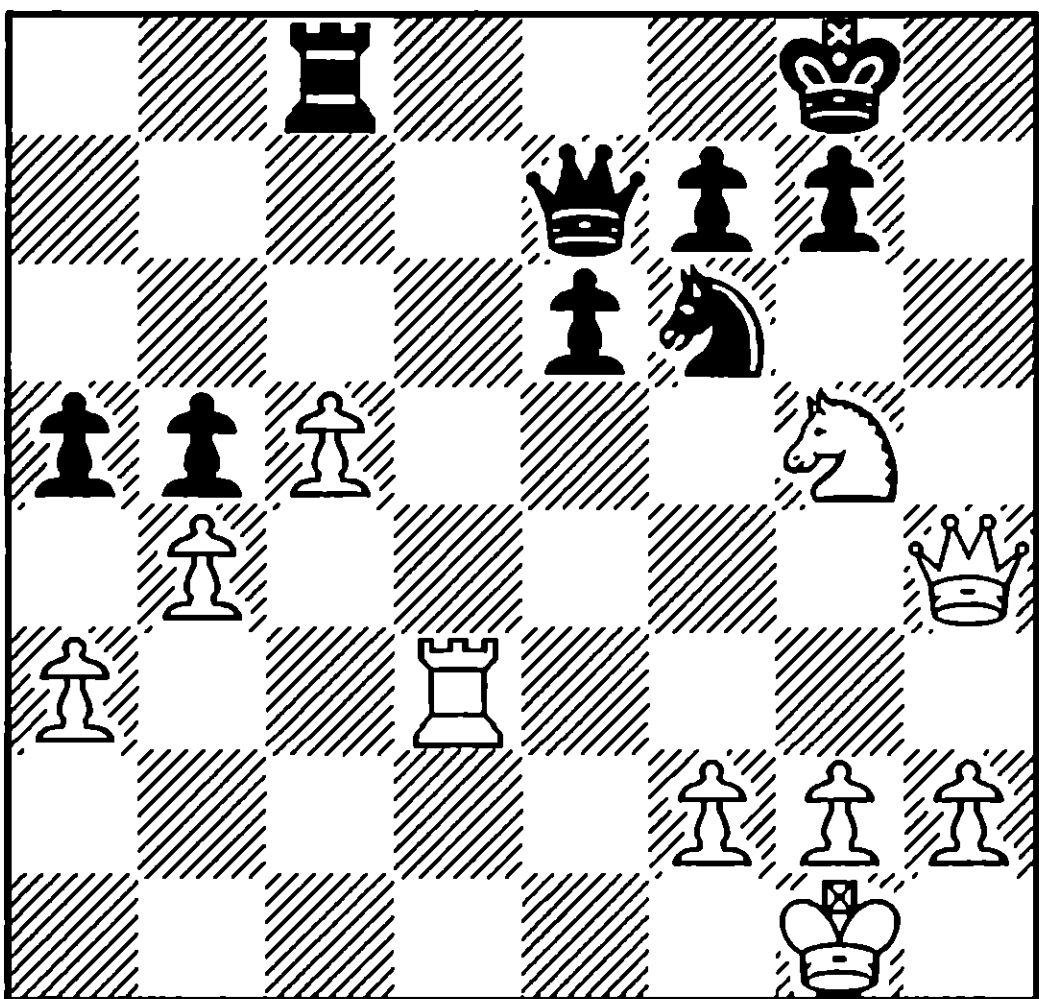
38 ♞8e3 ♔g6 39 g3 ♞c3 40 ♞b1 ♞d5 41 ♞e2 ♞xe2 42 ♔xe2

Now that Khalifman has managed to exchange a pair of rooks things are very much easier, since the potential for tricks by Black is considerably diminished.

42...♞d4 43 ♔d2 b4 44 f3 ♞c5 45 ♔c2 ♞c3 46 ♞a1 ♞e2 47 ♔b3 ♞g1 48 ♔xb4 ♞xh2 49 a4 ♞xg3 50 a5 ♞b8 51 ♔c4 ♞f5 52 ♞b1 1-0

The crafty trick on move 24 that let Khalifman cash in his chips is worth noting because it happens time after time:

C.Gottschlich-A.Wrtal Passau 1998



Black to play

32...♞d8

Black is struggling a pawn down and hopes to generate some counter-play, but the lesson handed down by Khalifman should help you to find the right reply:

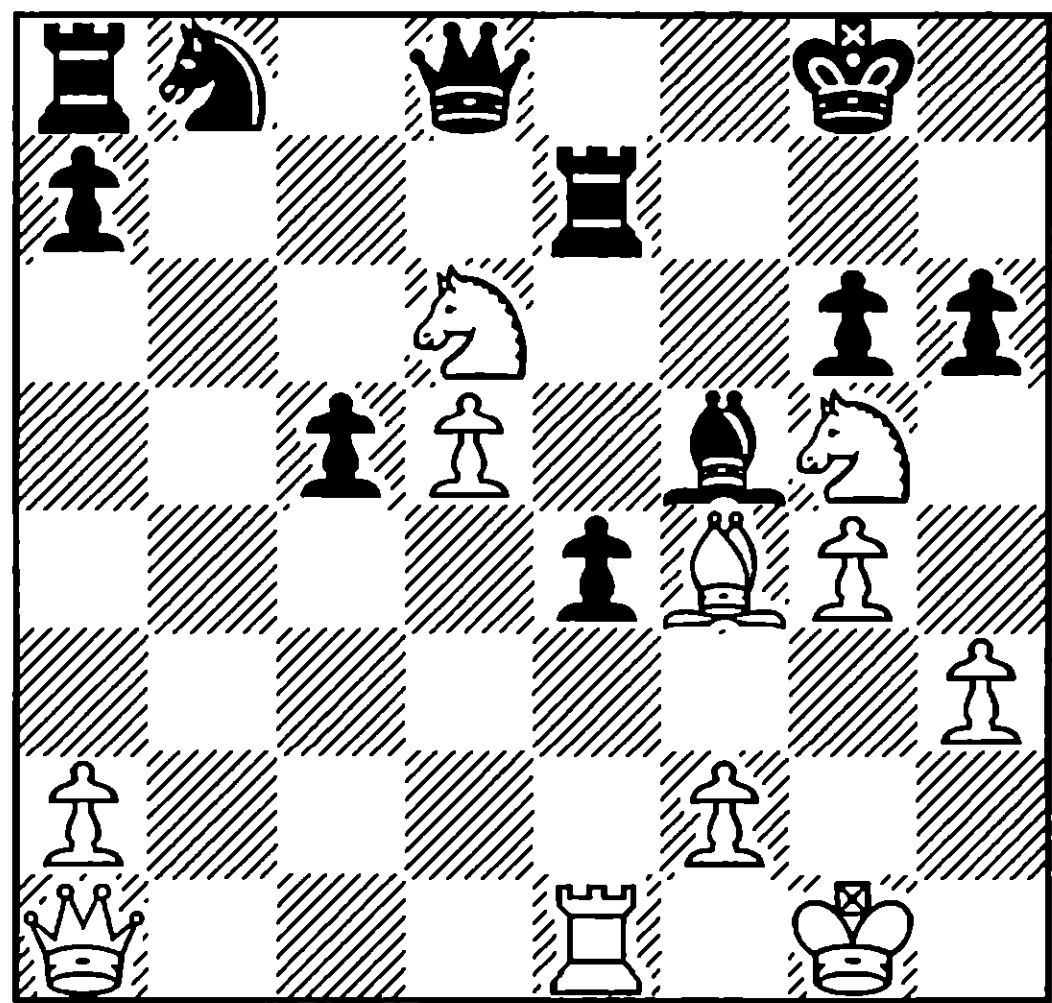
33 ♞xd8+ ♔xd8 34 ♔h8+!

Once again this trick works wonders, cleverly winning another pawn to enter a far superior ending. The game concluded:

34...♔xh8 35 ♞xf7+ ♔g8 36 ♞xd8 axb4 37 axb4 ♞d5 38 ♞c6 ♔f7 39 g3 ♔e8 40 ♔g2 ♔d7 41 ♞e5+ ♔c7 42 ♞d3 ♔c6 43 ♔f3 ♞f6 44 h4 ♔d5 45 ♞f4+ ♔c4 46 c6 ♞e8 47 ♞xe6 1-0

The combination works well in a variety of positions and prior knowledge of it can really promote success:

R.Livshits-J.Horton
Canadian Championship,
Toronto 1996



White to play

19 ♖gf7!

19 ♖df7! comes to the same thing. However, on the verge of victory one still has to be careful: after the immediate 19 ♔h8+? ♕xh8 20 ♖gf7+, crucially Black is not obliged to give up the exchange, but can reply 20...♔g7! 21 ♖xd8 ♕d7 with equal chances.

19...♔xf7 20 ♔h8+ ♕xh8 21 ♖xf7+ ♔g7 22 ♖xd8

The end of the combination sees White clearly on top – especially as the black pieces are badly co-ordinated, allowing White to win more material.

22...♖d7

22...♕d7 is met by 23 ♖xe4 intend-

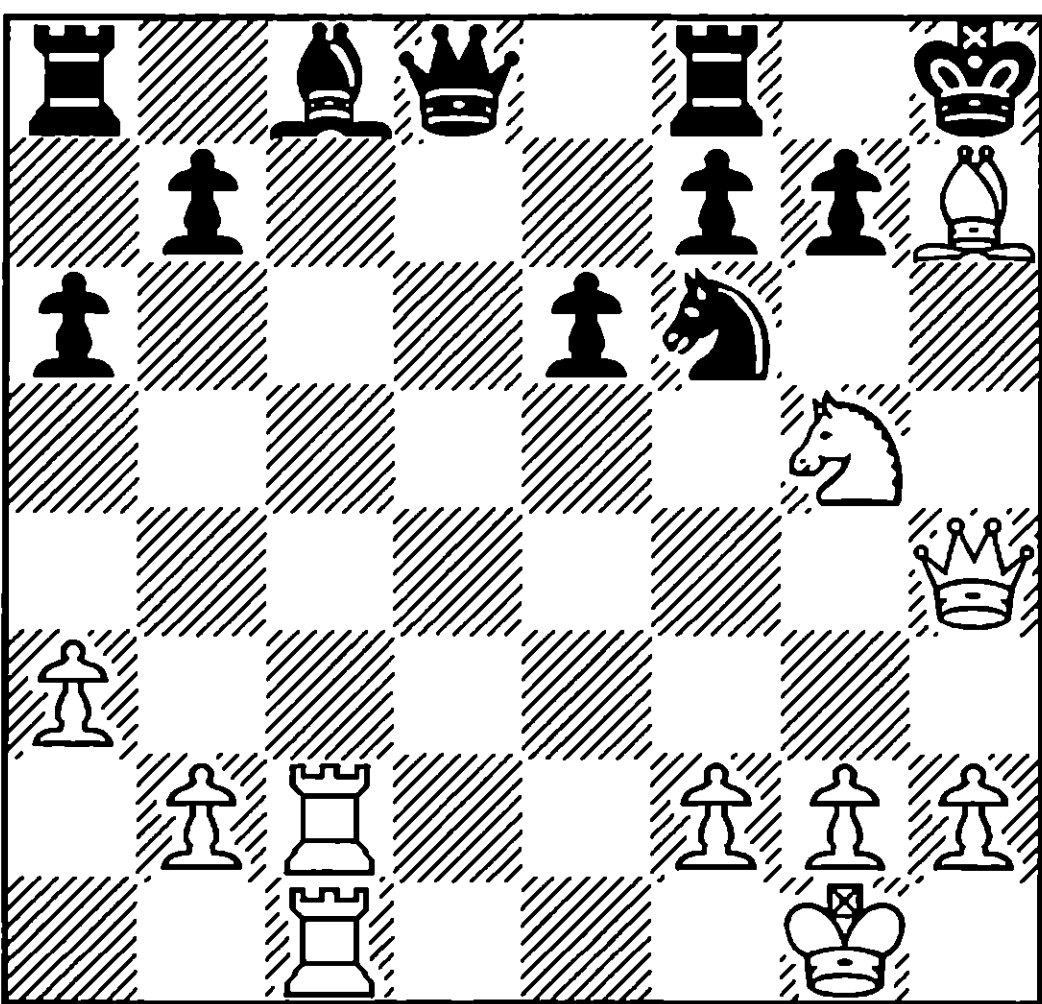
ing ♖e7+, and 22...♖a6 23 ♕e5+ ♖h7 24 ♕f6 ♕d7 25 ♖xe4 is fantastic for White.

23 ♕c7! ♖c8 24 d6 ♖e5 25 gxf5 ♖f3+ 26 ♔f1 ♖xe1 27 d7 1-0

Black resigned in view of 27...♖xc / 28 ♖e6+ or 27...♖a8 28 ♖c6 and wins.

Finally, another chance to see how this combination can finish off an opponent in style.

I.Rogers-Y.H.Anderson
Bali 2000



White to play

25 ♕g6+

Once again a practical decision, as White takes the chance to enter a winning ending thanks to the visually stunning queen combination. 25 ♖c3, intending to transfer the rook to h3, is also very strong because 25...e5 (to uncover the light-squared bishop) fails immediately to 26 ♕f5+ ♔g8 27 ♖h3

and mate will follow.

25...♙g8 26 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 27 ♜h8+!

This should be obvious by now, and once again it is a decisive trick.

27...♙xh8 28 ♜xf7+ ♔g8 29 ♞xd8 ♙d7
30 ♜xb7 e5 31 b4 ♔h7 32 f3 ♙a4 33
♞e2 ♞e8 34 ♞ce1 e4 35 ♞d6 ♞d8 36
♞xe4 ♞h5 37 g3 ♙b5 38 ♞d2 ♞f8 39
♞d5 1-0

Cash in your chips and carry on attacking!

I have been preaching the need to be realistic when attacking, with the emphasis on being practical and accepting the chance to win material. However, there will be times when you do this and still keep going on the offensive.

Game 34 V.Ivanchuk-L.Van Wely Wijk aan Zee 2010 Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♞f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♞xd4 ♞f6
5 ♞c3 a6

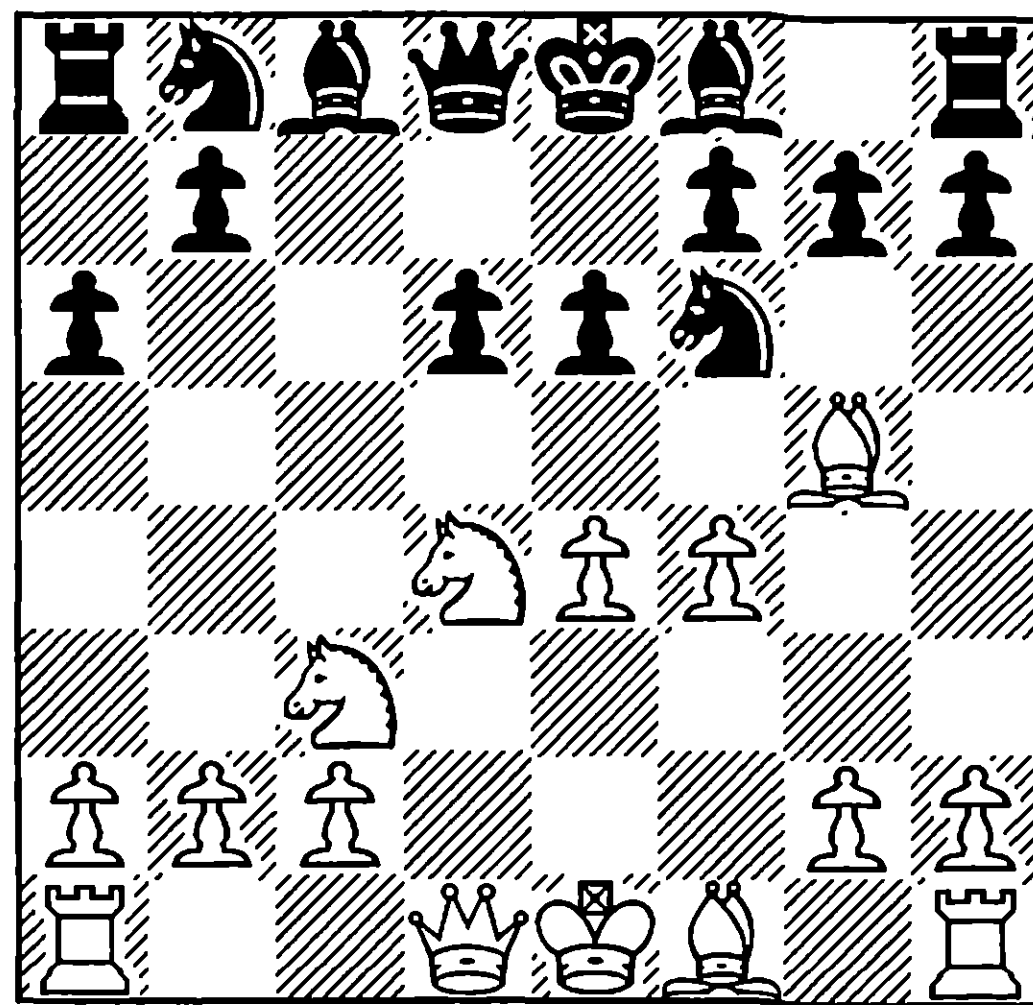
The Najdorf Variation, which is named after the famous grandmaster, Miguel Najdorf (1910-1997), who played it and popularized it throughout his entire career.

6 ♙g5

This is considered the top choice for players who like to attack in the opening. The standard plan is to play f2-f4, aiming for pawn breaks with e4-e5 or f4-f5 if possible. As Black naturally

takes steps to prevent this, White moves his queen out to e2 or f3 and then castles queenside.

6...e6 7 f4



This is considered the most aggressive continuation and tends to be very tactical, so if you want to imitate the attacking glories of the best players it is necessary, whether you are Black or White, to learn precise lines to avoid being busted in 25 moves. Nevertheless, attacking and mating patterns do emerge so, as usual, *history always repeats*.

7...♞bd7

Black prevents the safe advance of the white e-pawn. The critical alternative is 7...♞b6, aiming to take on b2, which is known as the Poisoned Pawn Variation and is notoriously complicated. Even Garry Kasparov on his Najdorf DVD could offer little advice as to which line was best, and concluded that players should investigate the various crazy positions on their computer.

8 ♞e2!?

Slightly unusual; 8 ♖f3 is the standard move here. In his notes to the game Ivanchuk added the telling comment “Loek was obviously not prepared for the given variation, since he thought for a long time over every move.” This problem of lack of recall can happen to all of us, but in complicated lines memory is fairly essential to avoid being smashed.

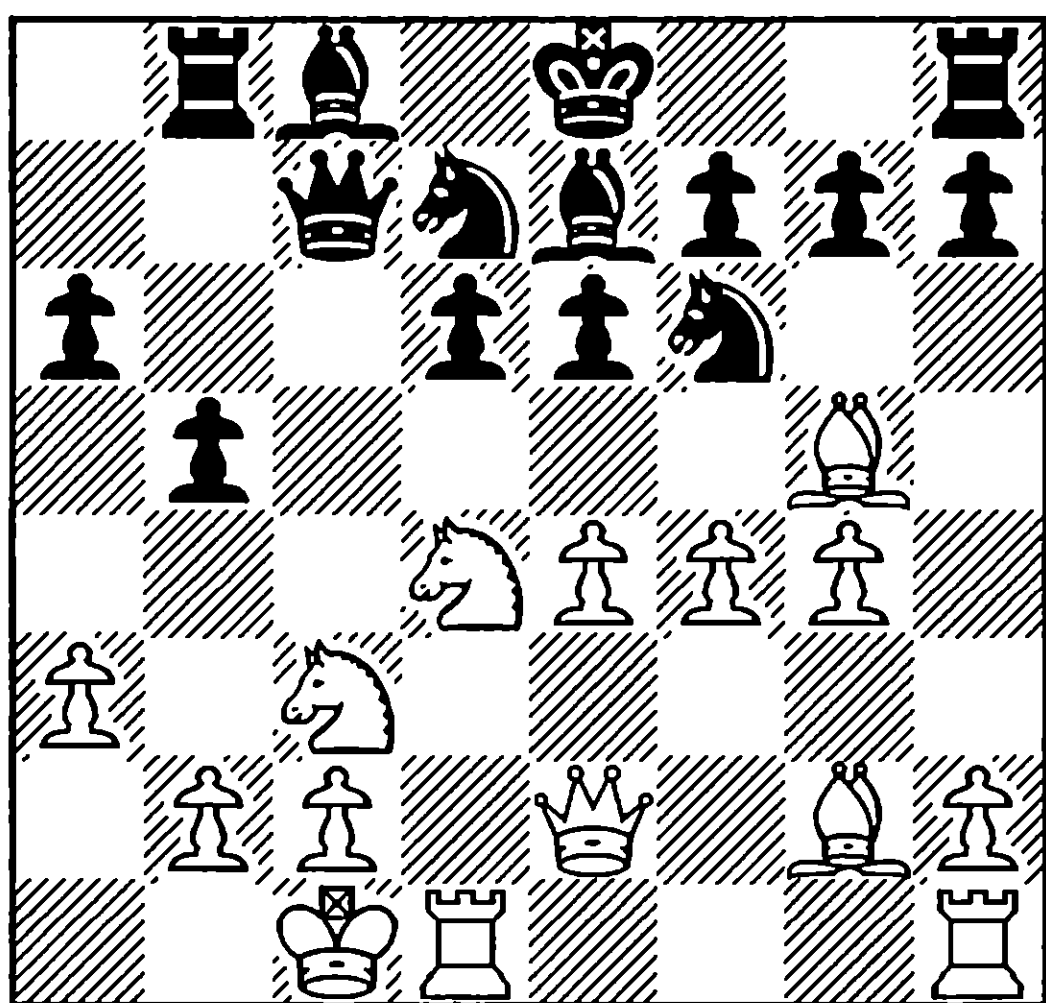
8...♔c7 9 0-0-0 b5 10 a3

Ivanchuk takes time to stop the further advance of the b-pawn, so that he can then go back to the objective of tormenting the black king.

10...♙e7!?

10...♙b7 is considered to be the main move.

11 g4 ♖b8 12 ♙g2



12...b4?

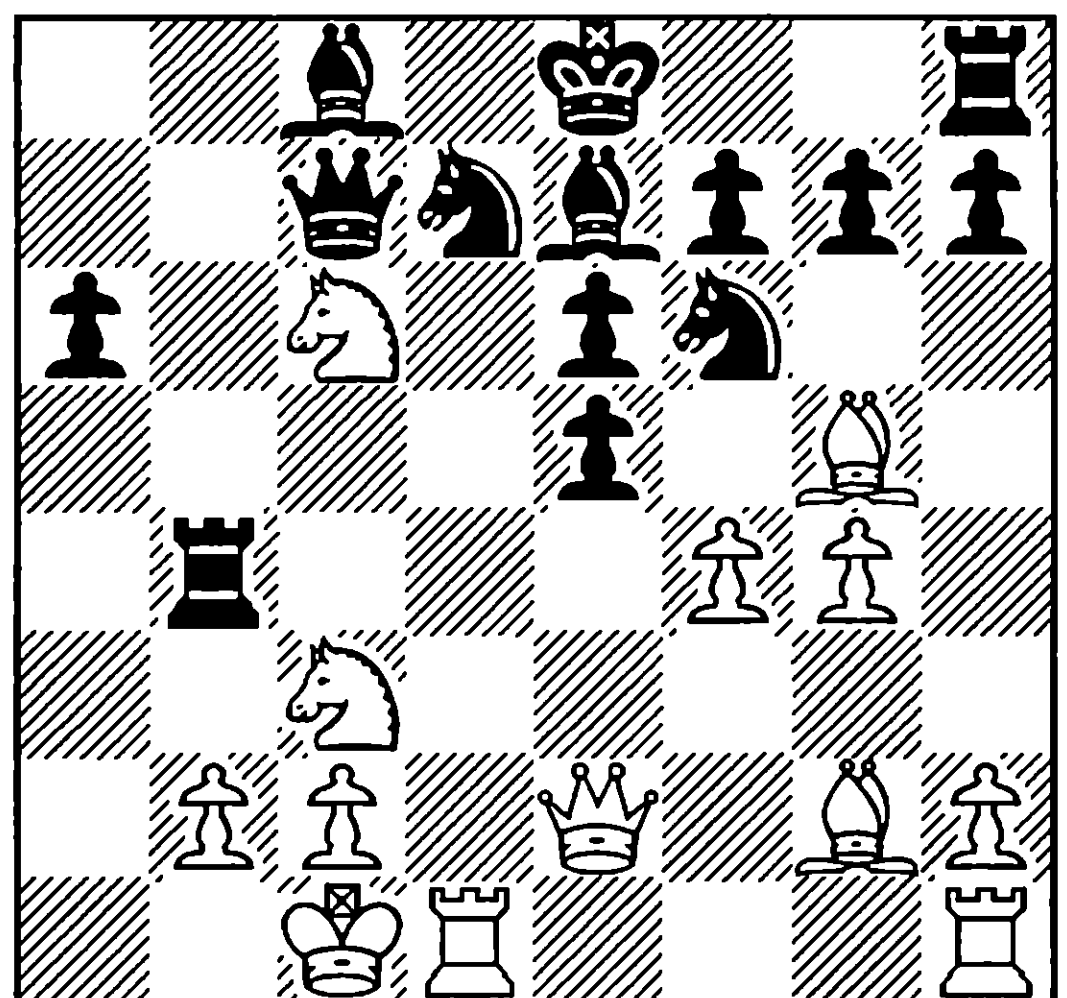
A poor continuation which allows White to go rapidly on the offensive. A superior continuation in the circumstances is 12...h6, when 13 ♙h4 ♙b7 14 ♖he1 gives White a slight edge.

13 axb4 ♖xb4 14 e5!

An important breakthrough which

gives the bishop on g2 a greater role in helping control the c6 square.

14...dxe5 15 ♘c6!



It was discovered afterwards that this positive line for White has all been played before. It is not clear whether Ivanchuk knew the actual game (see the next note) but he did add: “I remembered that in certain games ♘c6 was played, and in all of them White won. This inspired additional confidence” – a reminder that knowing attacking patterns can reap dividends for even elite players, so the rest of us should certainly benefit. However, one thing we do realize is that, with Van Wely consuming vast amounts of time, he had no idea he was being driven over the edge.

15...♙b7

Instead, the game K.Spraggett-J.Czaron, San Sebastian 2007, concluded 15...♖b6?! 16 ♘xe7 ♙b7 (after 16...♔xe7 17 fxe5 ♘xe5 18 ♖he1 ♘ed7 19 ♘d5+ or 17...♔xe5 18 ♖xd7+ ♙xd7 19 ♔xe5 Black can give up) 17 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 18 fxe5 ♘xe5 19 ♖de1 (19 ♘c8! is

also possible) 19 f3 e4 20 ♖xa6 1-0.

16 ♜xb4

White is happy to cash in his chips. After all, being the exchange up gives Ivanchuk all the winning chances and the bonus this time is that his attack will continue.

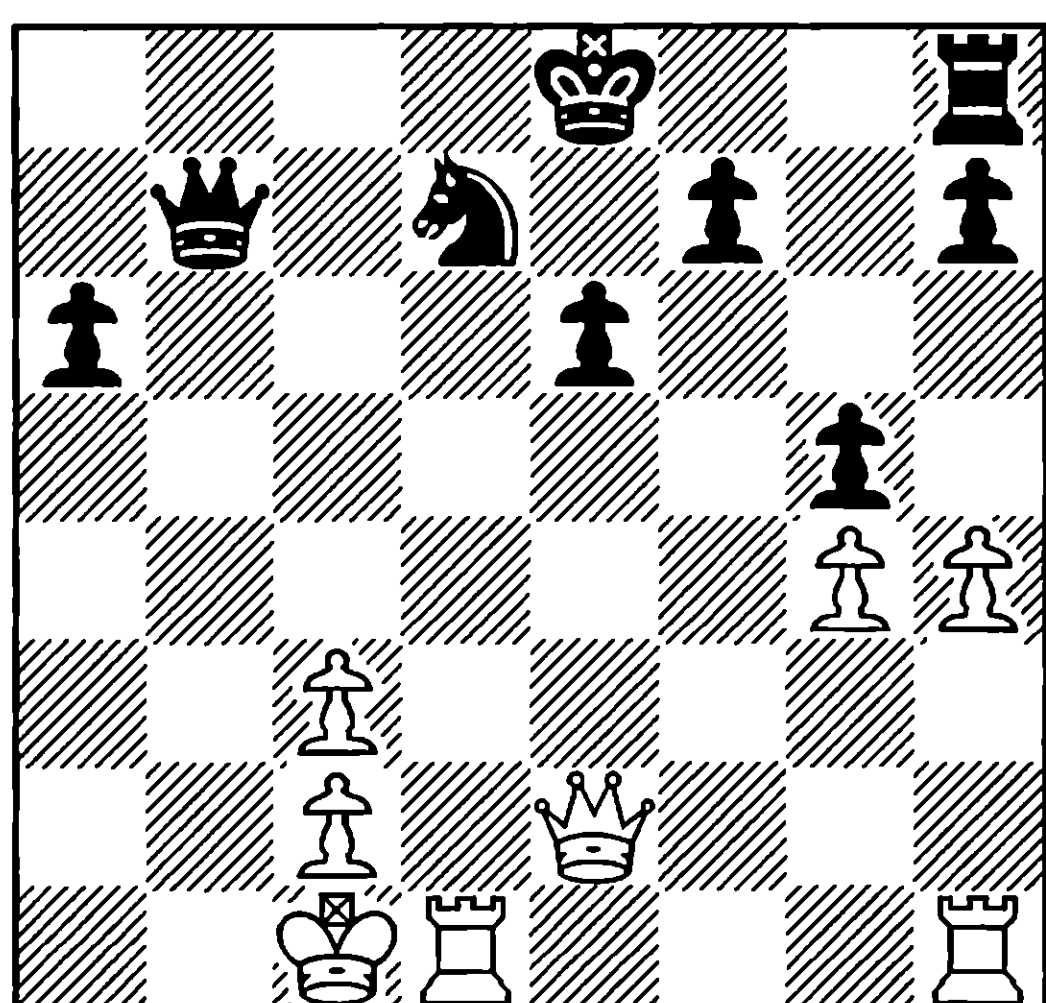
16...♙xb4 17 fxe5 ♙xc3

Black tries in vain to conjure up some counterplay, but he does not have enough pieces in support to make a realistic difference. Then again, 17...♞xe5?! 18 ♙xb7 ♙xc3 19 bxc3 ♖xc3 20 ♖xa6 O-O 21 ♜hg1 is very good news for White.

18 exf6 gxf6 19 bxc3

White decides to seek exchanges to take advantage of his material plus. It certainly makes sense because Black's faint counterplay will then collapse, whereas White still has the initiative.

19...fxg5 20 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 21 h4!



White is showing the right way to handle such positions, not giving Black a chance to consolidate. Now the objective is to bring the king's rook into play and carry on attacking.

21...♖c7 22 hxg5 ♖xc3 23 ♖xa6 ♜c5 24 ♖a8+

White spots a winning line and takes the practical decision to go for it. If you want the perfect response there is 24 ♖c8+!, when 24...♙e7 25 ♜d7+ ♞xd7 26 ♖xc3 is overwhelming.

24...♙e7 25 ♖a7+ ♙f8 26 ♜hf1 1-0

“Chess fills my soul with riches.” – Vasily Ivanchuk, after his victory at the Merida tournament in 2007.

The theme of taking the material and then finding a way to exert more pressure is relayed once again in the next game:

Game 35

G.Lane-I.Rogers

Gold Coast Classic 2001

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 c3

The c3 Sicilian is a useful way to avoid the heavily analysed main lines and is a more than viable alternative. White indicates a basic plan of playing d2-d4 to create a pawn centre. This used to be known as the Alapin Variation, after the Lithuanian master Semyon Alapin (1856-1923), but for some reason that was changed to the simple “c3 Sicilian” when there was an explosion of interest in the opening in the 1970s.

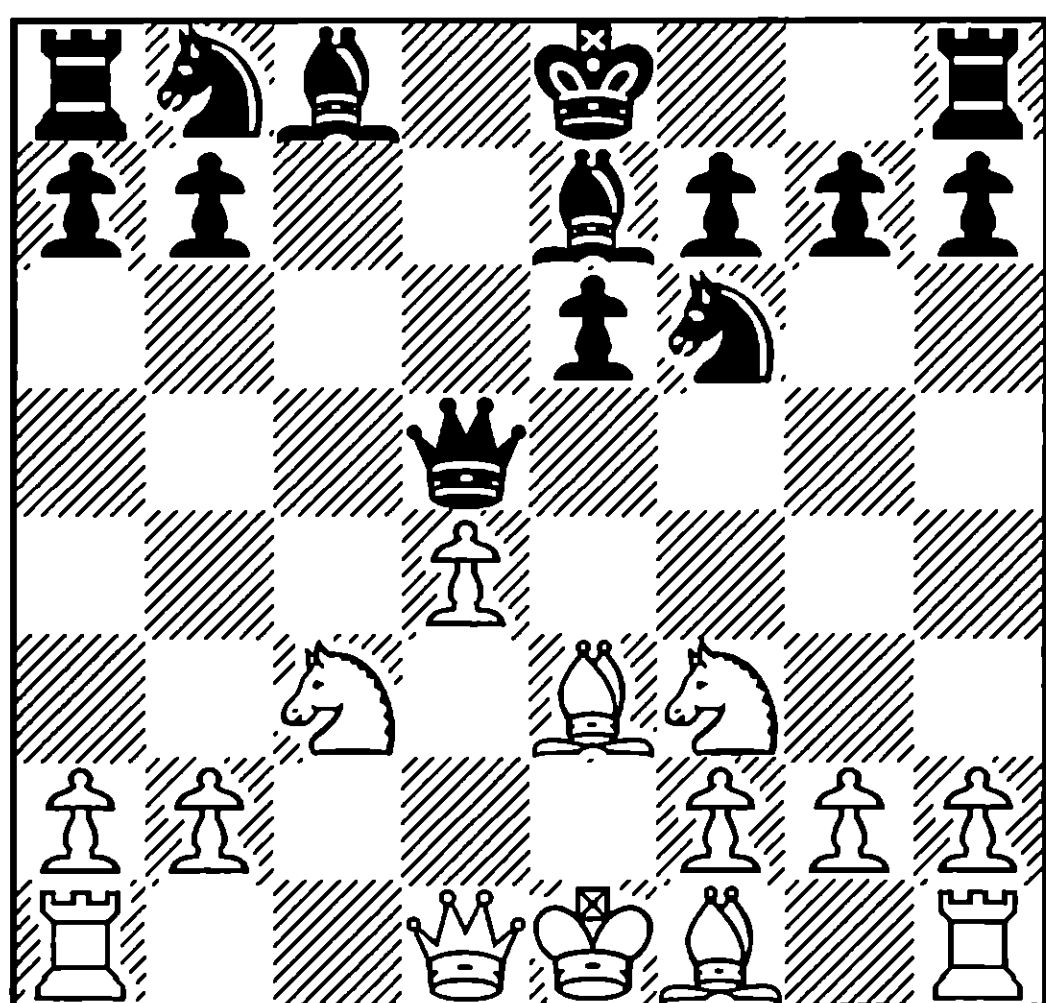
2...d5 3 exd5 ♖xd5

A popular system for Black who is not afraid of moving his queen out early, mainly because the c3-square is not immediately available to White's queen's knight, which would otherwise be used to chase the queen away.

4 d4 e6 5 ♘f3 ♘f6 6 ♙e3 cxd4

Black exchanges on d4 before White can time it right to take on c5 himself, when Black would be unable to take back with the bishop on f8 because, after an exchange of queens, White would win a piece.

7 cxd4 ♙e7 8 ♘c3



8...♙d8

There is still some debate as to the best square for the queen:

a) 8...♙a5 9 ♙c4 (9 ♙d3 looks like a decent alternative) 9...♘e4 10 0-0! ♘xc3 11 bxc3 0-0 (11...♙xc3 12 ♙b5+ ♙d7? 13 ♖c1! ♙b2 14 ♖c8+ ♙d8 15 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 16 ♖c2 intending ♘e5+, or 12...♘d7 13 ♘e5 ♙a5 14 ♖b1 leaves Black on the brink of disaster already) 12 ♙b3 gave White the better game in L.Altounian-J.Peters, Costa Mesa 2003.

b) 8...♙d6 may be best, though

Black has to play accurately to avoid moving the queen again: 9 ♙d3 ♙c6 10 a3 0-0 11 0-0 ♙d5 12 ♙c2 led to roughly equal chances in E.Ghaem Maghami-A.Dreev, Moscow 2009.

After the text Black would argue that he now has a target in the form of the isolated d-pawn. White, on the other hand, is eager to show that the pawn is useful in controlling the e5 square and that he can build up his forces behind it for a potential kingside attack.

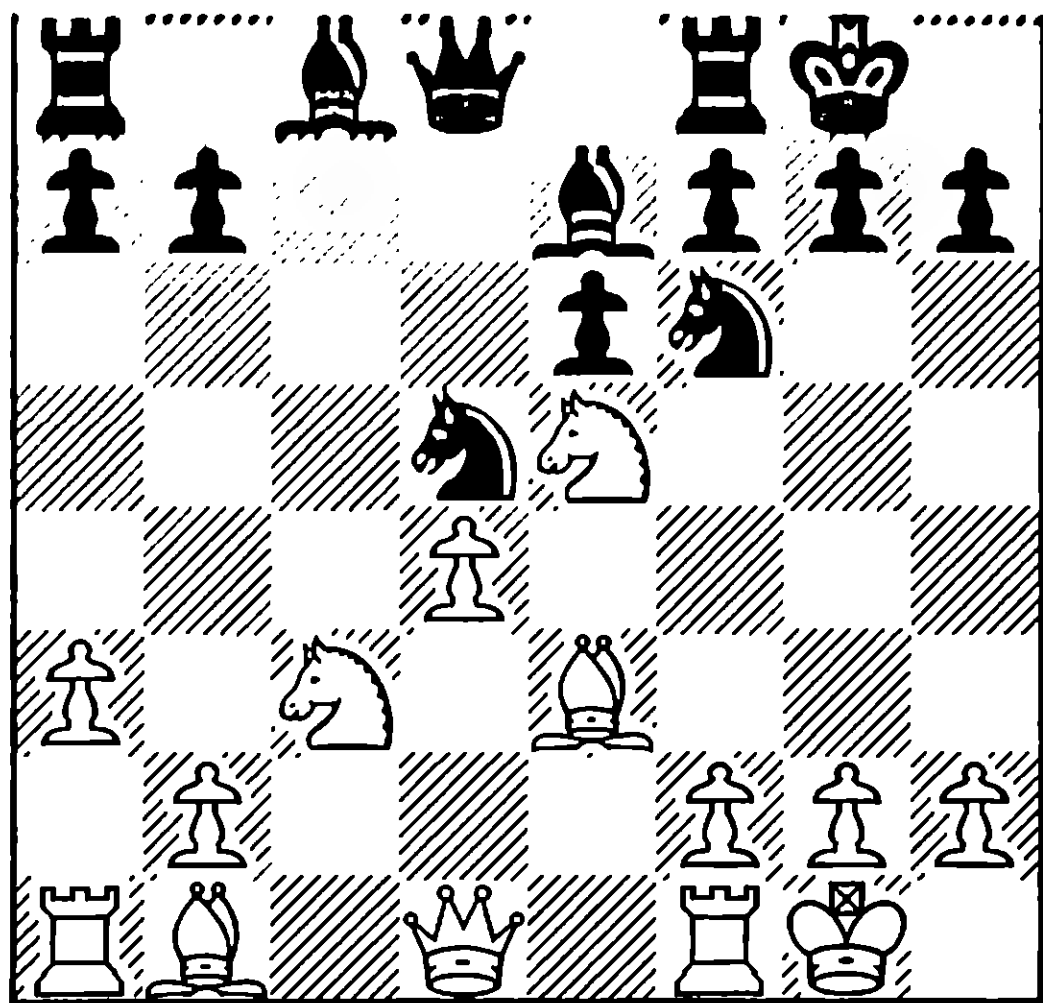
9 ♙d3 0-0 10 0-0 ♘c6

I later found out that the game G.Kasparov-J.A.Fernandez, Cordoba (simul) 1992, followed the same path - until Black tried 10...b6 at this point. It is curious that there are echoes in the game with my own play, the standard theme being to target the h7-pawn to induce concessions in the black pawn shield: 11 ♙e2 ♙b7 12 ♖ad1 ♘bd7 13 ♖fe1 ♘d5 14 ♙d2 ♘7f6 15 ♘e5 ♖c8 16 ♙b1 (as in my game, White prepares to play ♙d3 to up the pressure against h7) 16...♘xc3 17 bxc3 a6 18 ♙d3 g6 19 ♙h3 with the initiative, though Kasparov soon chanced his arm and came out worse.

11 ♘e5 ♘b4

The idea is that one should block an isolated pawn and only then seek to undermine it. I have enough experience of this line to know that such action by Black can take ages, allowing White to construct a useful attack.

12 ♙b1 ♘bd5 13 a3

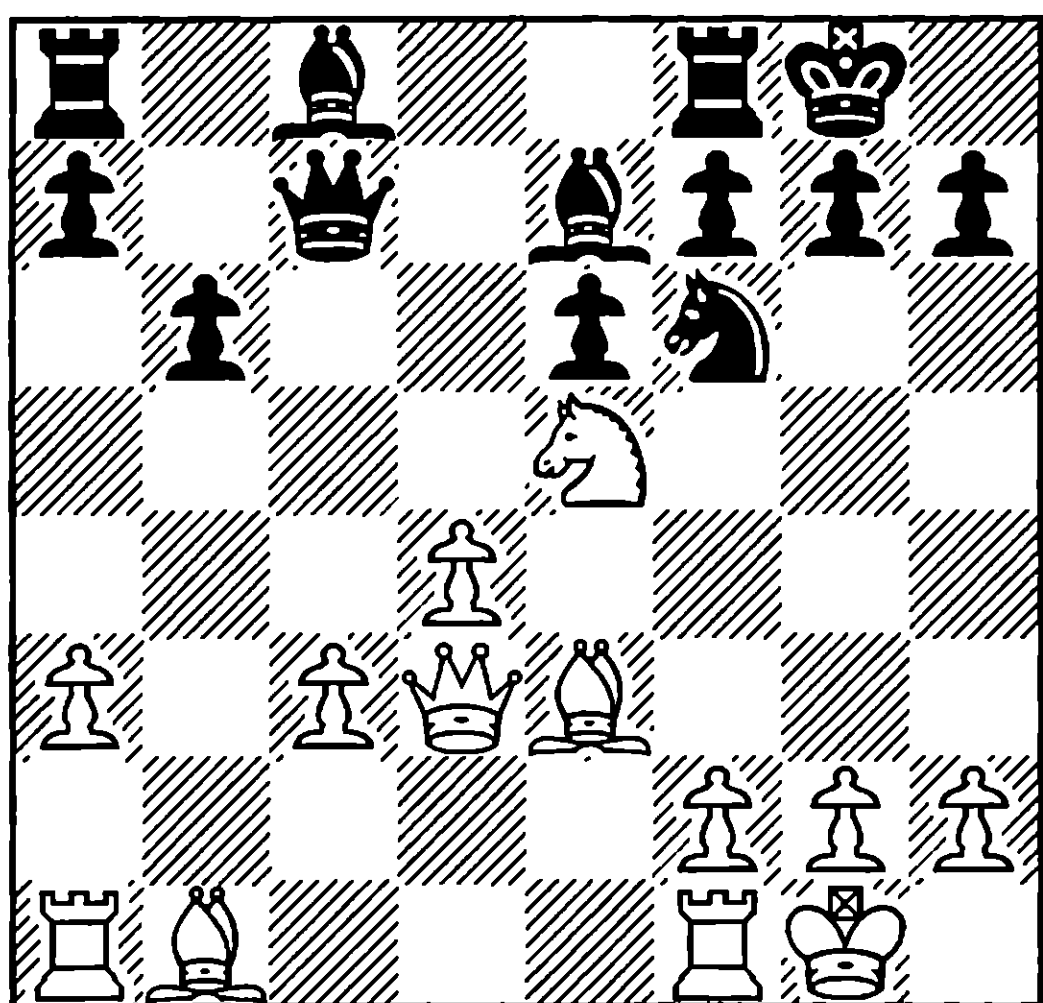


I want to play ♔d1-d3 to start issuing threats against the h7-pawn, but ...♞b4 is bothersome so I put a stop to that first.

13...♞xc3?!

After the game Rogers felt this is where he started to go wrong. He was hoping to make the most of the pawn being on c3, but in fact the weakness is illusory, since I can distract him from such ambitions by creating chances on the kingside. In the national magazine of Australia (quaintly called *Australasian Chess*) he suggested 13...♞d7 as an improvement.

14 bxc3 ♔c7 15 ♔d3 b6



16 ♞f4!?

I am not convinced that c7 was the right place for the queen because it encourages me to gain time by attacking it. Here my threat is 17 ♞g6.

16...♔b7?

An admission that something has seriously gone wrong. Black's queen moves yet again and just gets in the way of developing his remaining pieces. The far from obvious 16...♞e8 is arguably the best choice.

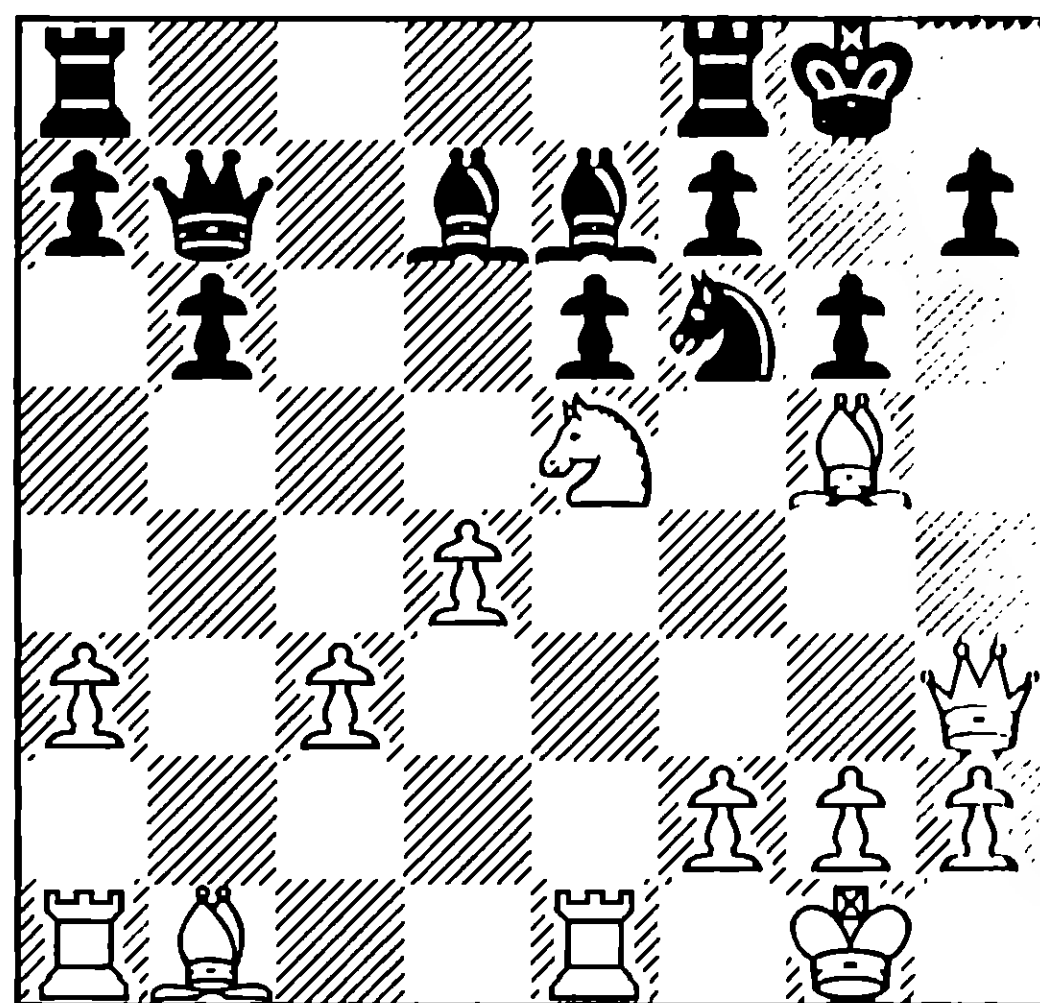
17 ♞e1

Activating the king's rook and now, even without precise calculation, I can use the *count the pieces* method to realize that I have good chances. I have five pieces well placed to cause damage to the enemy king, whereas Black is defending with only three: the knight, bishop and rook.

17...g6 18 ♞h3

I was glad to have provoked ...q7 q6 and now wanted to exploit the weaknesses of the dark squares by shifting the queen to either h4 or h6.

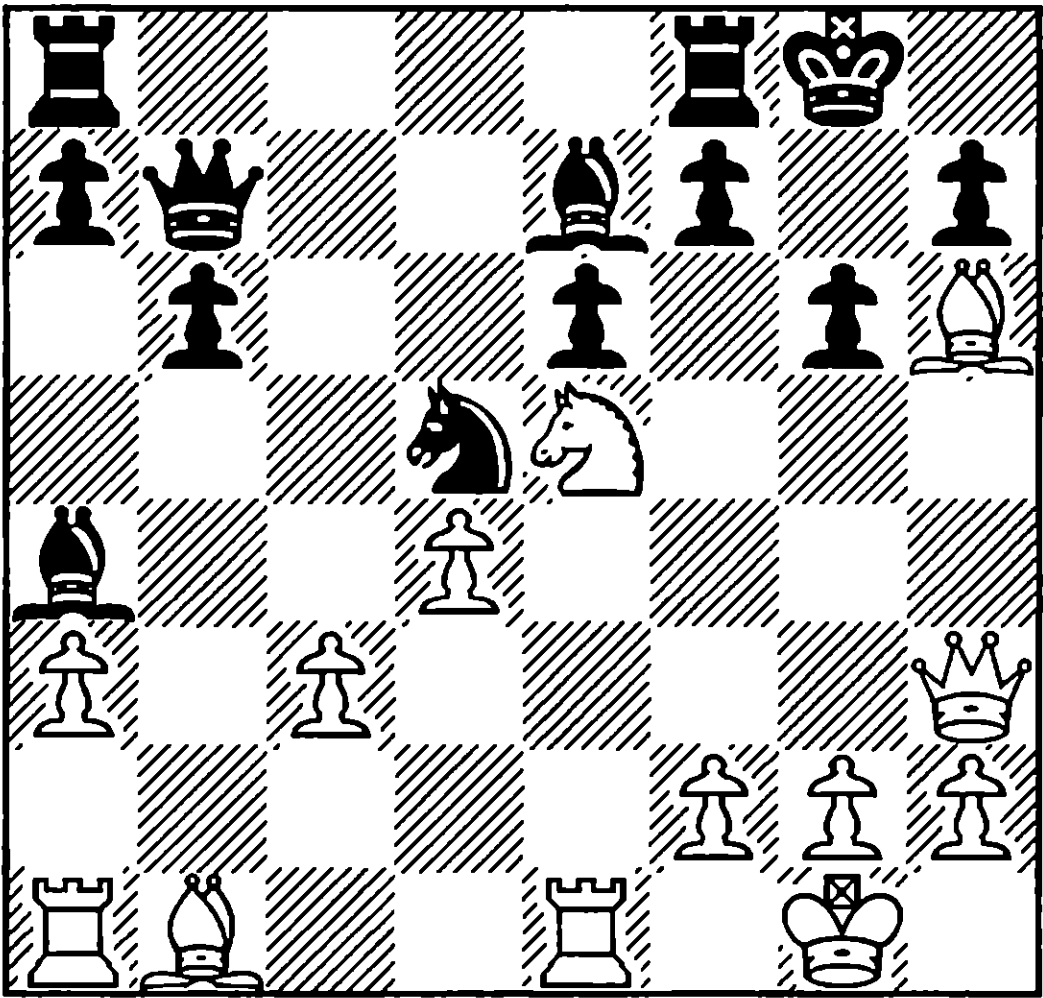
18...♞d7 19 ♞g5!



The threats are beginning to multiply, the obvious one being ♖xf6 and then ♕e4 to win material, while I can also think about ♔h4.

19...♘d5 20 ♕h6 ♕a4!?

Ian Rogers is a canny grandmaster and his huge record of victories in weekend tournaments owes a lot to his practical style. Here he prepares to shed some material to fight off the onslaught. Instead, after 20...♖fd8 it is easy for me to torment him even more: 21 c4 ♘f6 22 ♕g5 ♖ac8 23 ♔h4 ♙g7 24 ♖e3! (I have massive threats stemming from ♖f3 or ♖h3) 24...♕c6 25 ♔h6+ ♙g8 26 ♕xg6! fxg6 (or 26...hxxg6 27 ♘xg6 fxg6 28 ♔xg6+ ♙f8 29 ♕h6 mate) 27 ♘xg6 ♘g4 28 ♘xe7+ ♔xe7 29 ♔h4 and Black can resign.



21 ♕xf8

I am happy to cash in my chips since the extra material gives me a clear advantage. Even better, in this case I can also make an effort to keep on attacking.

21...♖xf8 22 c4 ♘f6 23 ♕a2

The idea is to advance the d-pawn

so that Black will have to defend, snuffing out any hint of counterplay.

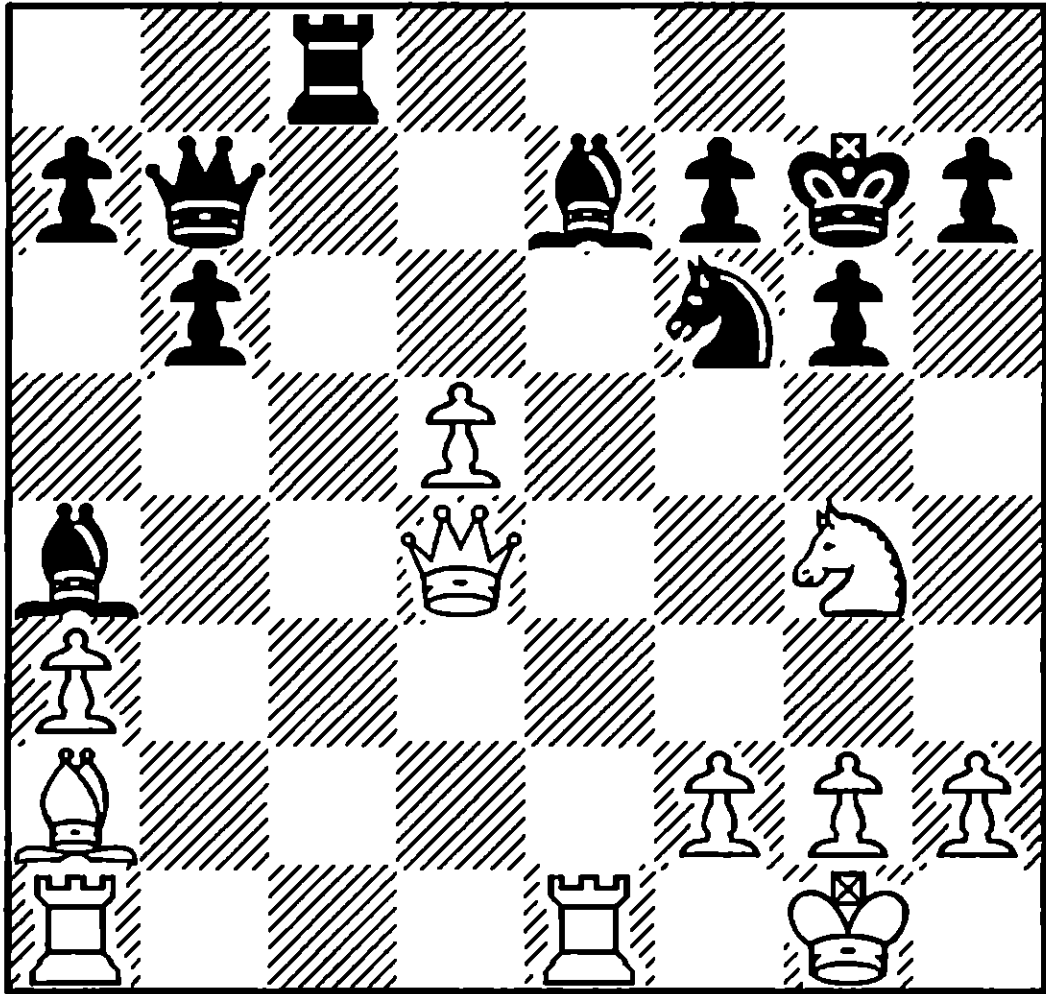
23...♙g7 24 d5! exd5 25 cxd5 ♕c5

If 25...♘xd5? White pounces with ♔f3, when 26...♖d8 of course allows ♔xf7+.

26 ♔c3 ♖c8

The basic-looking 26...♙g8 is the best way to prolong the game, though 27 ♔c4 ♕e8 28 a4 still leaves White with a sizeable advantage.

27 ♔b2 ♕d6?! 28 ♘g4! ♕e7 29 ♔d4



The easiest way to make Black suffer, threatening the light-squared bishop while also supporting the passed d-pawn.

29...♕c2 30 d6 ♕d8 31 ♖ac1 ♕f5 32 ♘e5

The knight is added to the onslaught and now the f7-pawn is the target, forcing Black even more onto the defensive.

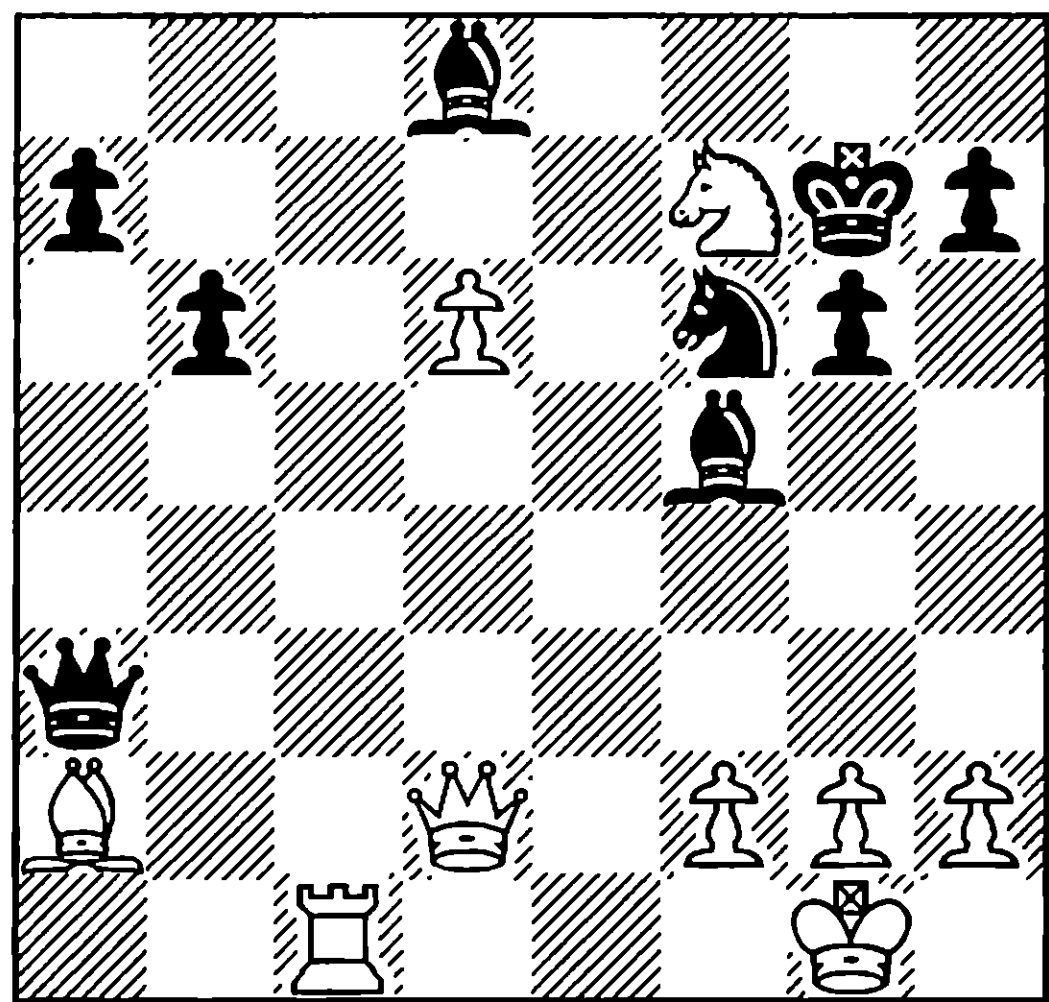
32...♖xc1 33 ♖xc1 ♔a6

After 33...♕e6 34 ♕xe6 fxe6 35 d7 Black has an awful position.

34 ♘xf7 ♔xa3 35 ♔d2

The rook is defended, and at the

same time I am poised to land the queen on h6.



35...♘e4 36 ♔h6+ ♕f6

Black is sportingly playing on to allow me a king chase, though he is also hoping my time-trouble will make a difference.

37 ♖c4 b5 38 ♘xd8 bxc4

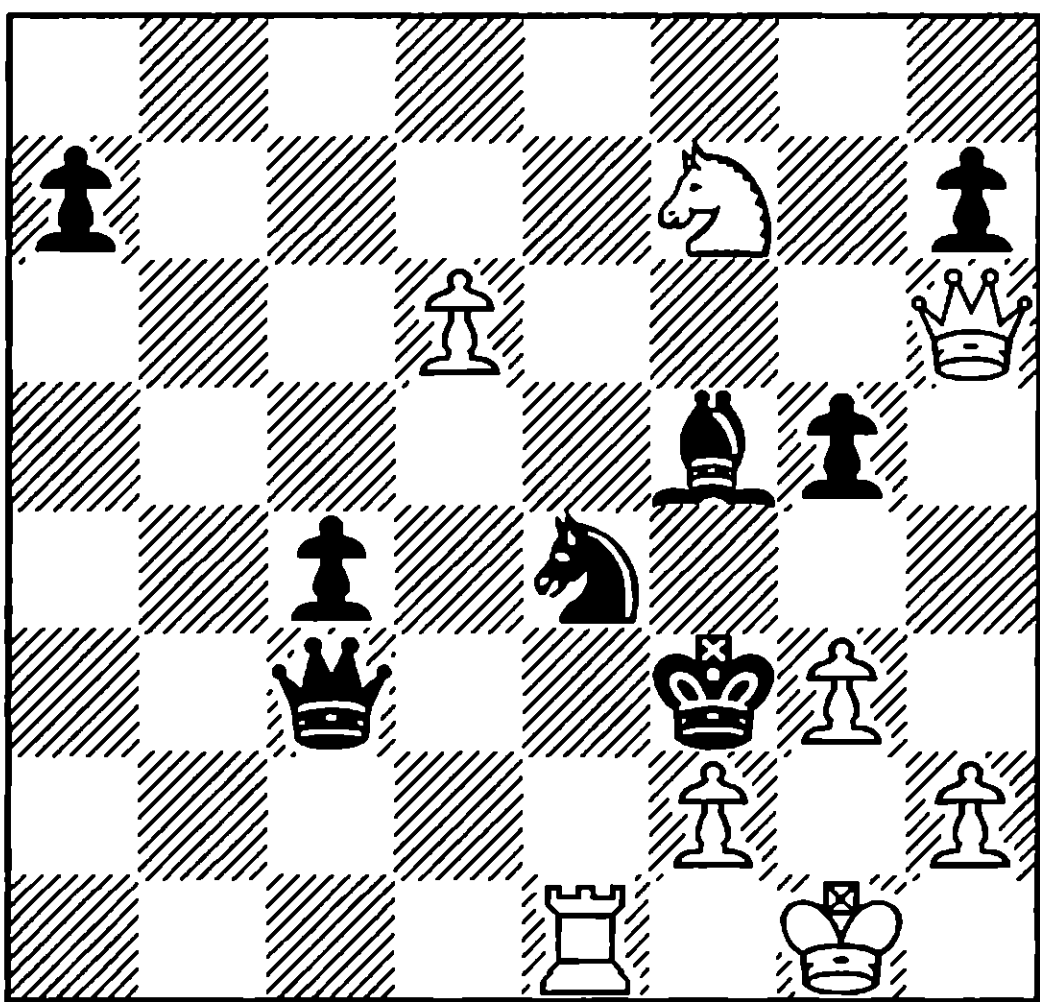
White is having all the fun and is perfectly placed to snare the black king.

39 ♔f8+ ♕g5 40 ♘f7+ ♕f4 41 ♖e1

This is the quickest way to mate since Black is hardly in a position even

to avoid more checks.

41...♔c3 42 ♔h6+ g5 43 g3+ ♕f3



44 ♘e5+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 44...♔xe5 45 ♖e3+ ♕g4 46 h3 mate.

“Young players often proudly ‘invent’ what was discarded a generation ago. They then add another chapter to a very old story, fancying all the while they have just stumbled across the plot of a new one.” – Emanuel Lasker in 1908.

Chapter Six

History Always Repeats Itself

“Every chess master was once a beginner.” – Irving Chernev.

One problem that a lot of people have with their chess is a lack of vision and speed in seeing combinations to aid the attack. It is said that positional play is the difference between the master and the casual player, and that the judgement of a position depends on assessing it correctly. This might involve rudimentary observations such as using the *count the pieces* method, but a strong attacking player will also make a search to see whether there is a chance to create a combination, or to lure the opponent into a position which allows a tactical opportunity. A master’s scan of the board can reveal these possibilities in a matter of moments, not because of fine calculation but because of accumulated knowledge. In particular, an experienced player is guided to a certain extent when attacking by recognizing

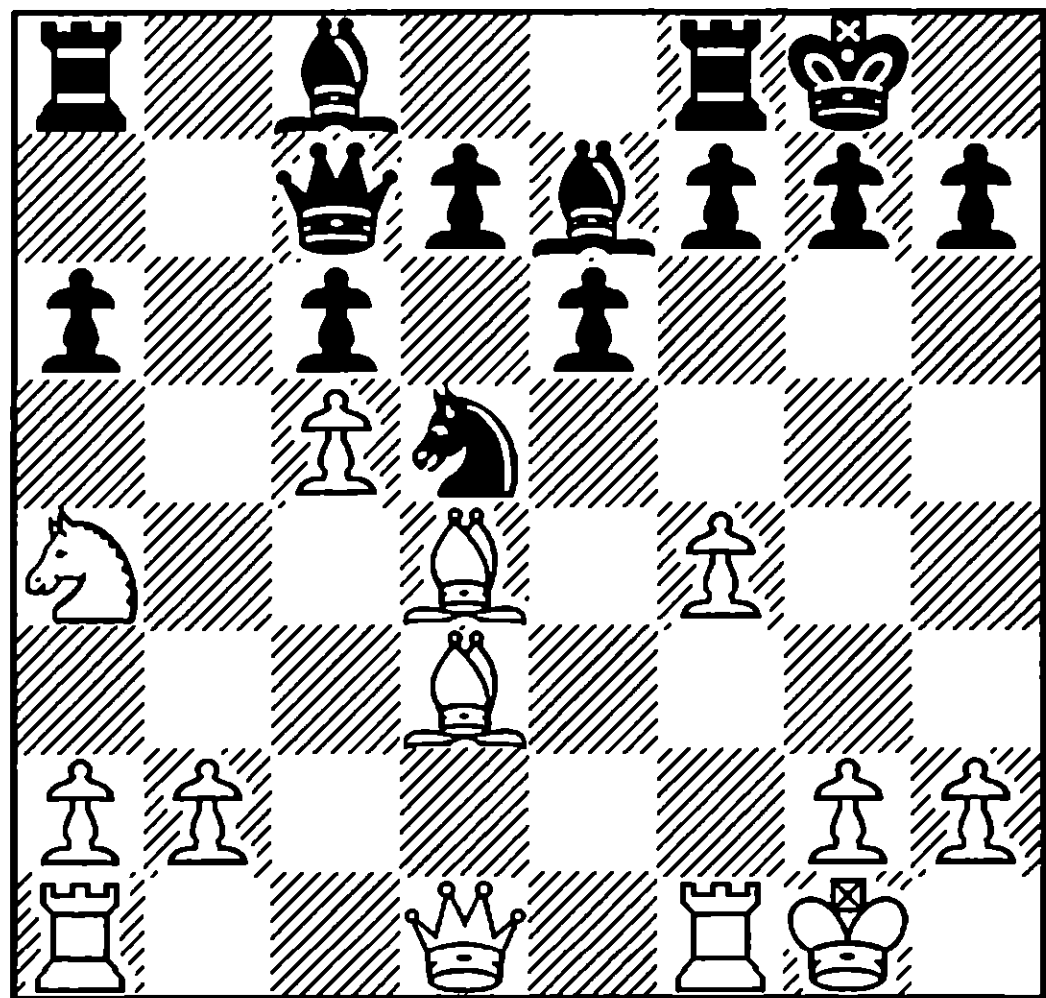
combinational patterns which can win material or assist in executing check mate. (If, I hasten to add, no combination or forcing move leading to an advantage is found, then the general rule is to improve your pieces.) If your number one priority is attacking, then knowing the right sort of positions to aim for is half the battle.

My earliest memory of the need to know chess history was when somebody at my local club presented a series of puzzles and then waited for the bemused players to answer the questions correctly. One of the games that had everyone stuck was this one:

G.Kuzmin-E.Sveshnikov
USSR Championship,
Moscow 1973

This position seemed baffling as a youngster, because I could not get 16

♖h5 to work, and even the standard 16 ♕xh7! did not have the usual spark. The solution seemed too fantastic to believe unless you were a grandmaster:



White to play

16 ♖b6!

The point of this move is to deflect the knight from defending the king-side, so ruling out a timely retreat to the f6-square.

16... ♖xb6

16... ♖b8 does not help, as after 17 ♖xd5 cxd5 White can carry on with the combination played: 18 ♕xh7+! ♔xh7 19 ♖h5+ ♔g8 20 ♕xg7! etc.

17 ♕xh7+!

The pawn barrier is broken down to allow the white queen to swiftly join in the action.

17... ♔xh7 18 ♖h5+ ♔g8 19 ♕xg7!

The double bishop sacrifice is the key to success with this tactic, because the black king is shown to be fatally exposed once White adds reinforcements to the attack.

19... ♔xg7 20 ♖g4+ ♔h7

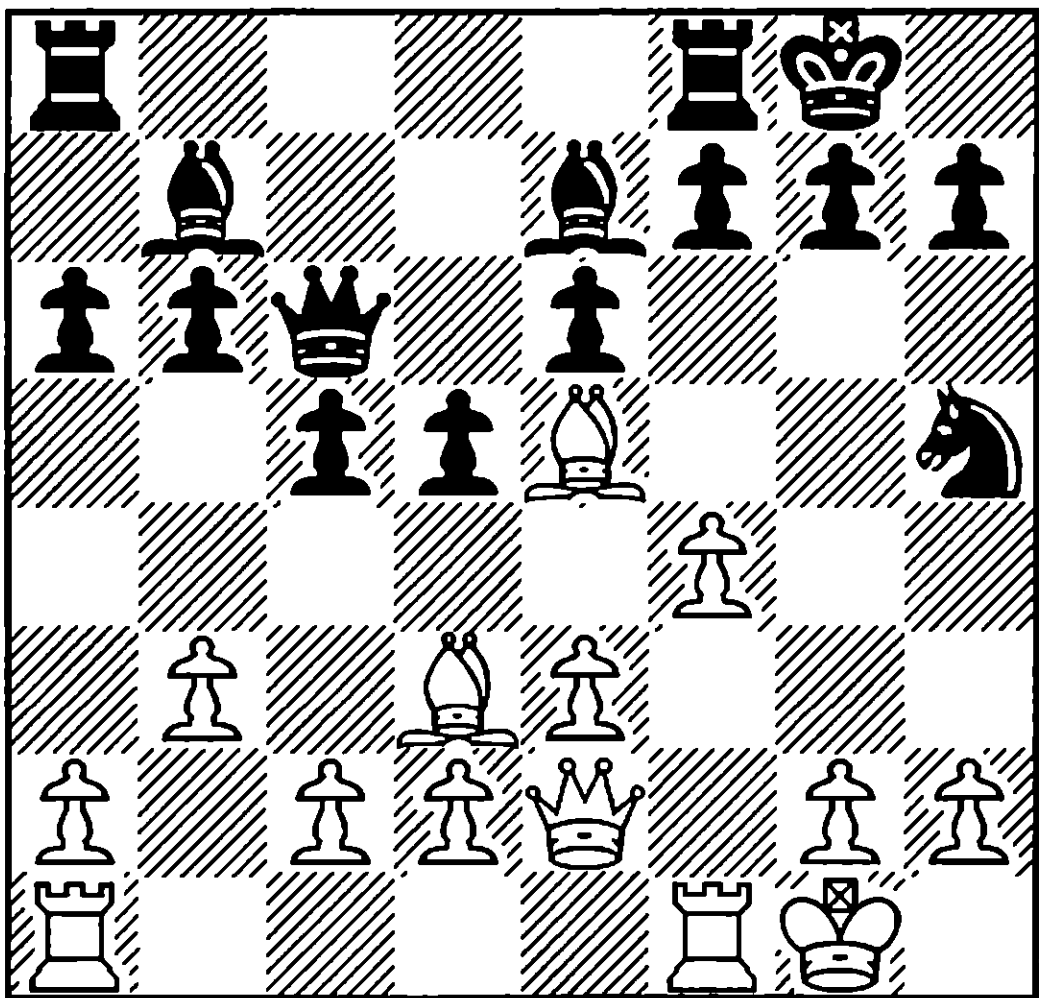
Or 20... ♖f6 21 ♖g5 mate.

21 ♖f3 1-0

The threat of ♖h3 mate is lethal.

My fellow club members were almost unanimous in their condemnation of such a difficult puzzle, but the quizmaster said something that struck a chord by replying “it is just a Lasker Attack”. It took me some time, and far too frequent trips to the chess section at the library, to discover what he really meant.

Em.Lasker-J.Bauer
Amsterdam 1889



White to play

Black has just exchanged knights on h5 and was expecting 16 ♖xh5 f5, after which White’s initiative fizzles out.

15 ♕xh7+!

The original Lasker Attack – and suddenly such a terrific combination is recognizable.

15...♙xh7 16 ♜xh5+ ♜g8 17 ♜xg7!!

The follow-up idea to expose the black king is the trademark move of this combination.

17...♔xg7

17...f5 was no better, as 18 ♖e5! ♜f6 19 ♜f3 and ♜g3 leads to mate.

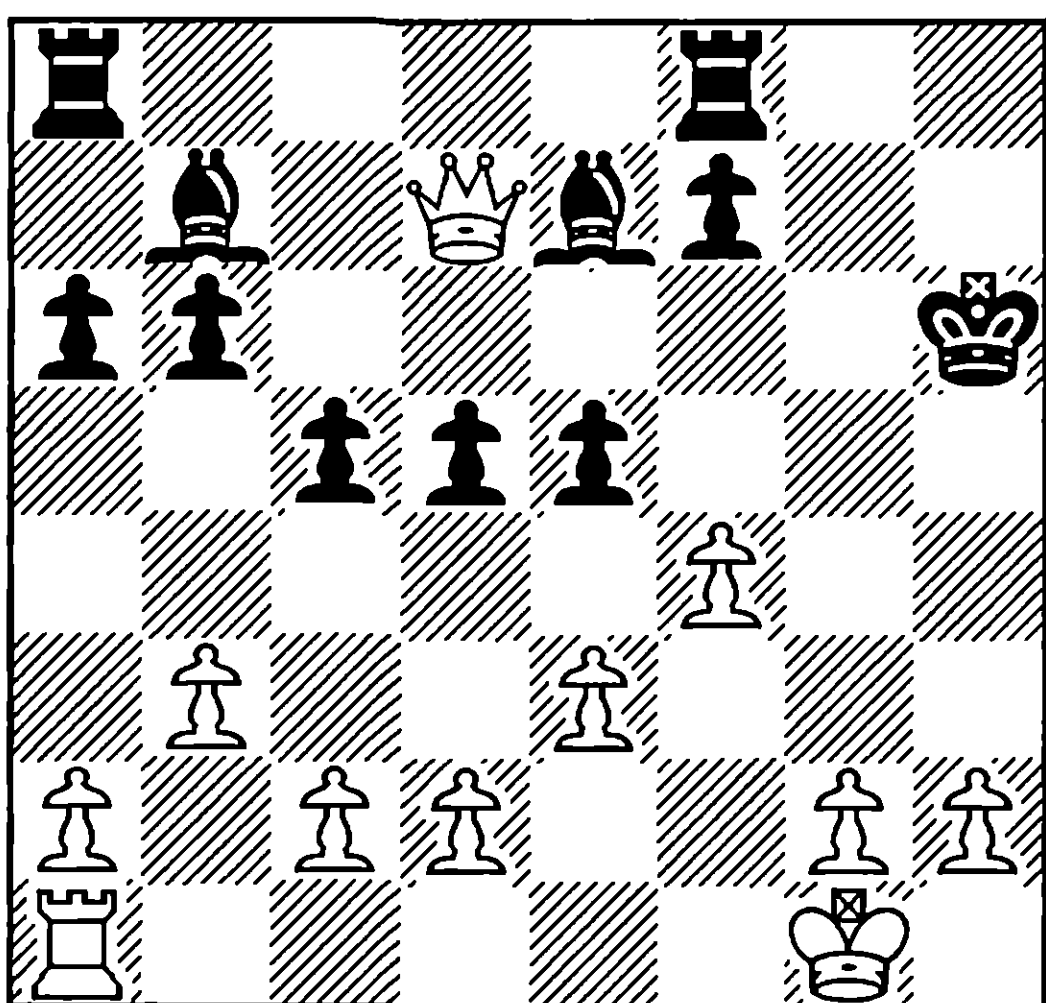
18 ♜g4+ ♔h7 19 ♜f3

Just like the previous example, the rook is added to the attack, leaving Black's position in ruins.

19...e5 20 ♜h3+ ♔h6 21 ♜xh6+ ♔xh6

Black has just about avoided mate but...

22 ♜d7!



...wins a piece and wraps up the game.

The easiest way, in my experience, to find combinations that help the attack in your own games is by looking through lots of them, just as a baseball player improves his batting by practicing regularly.

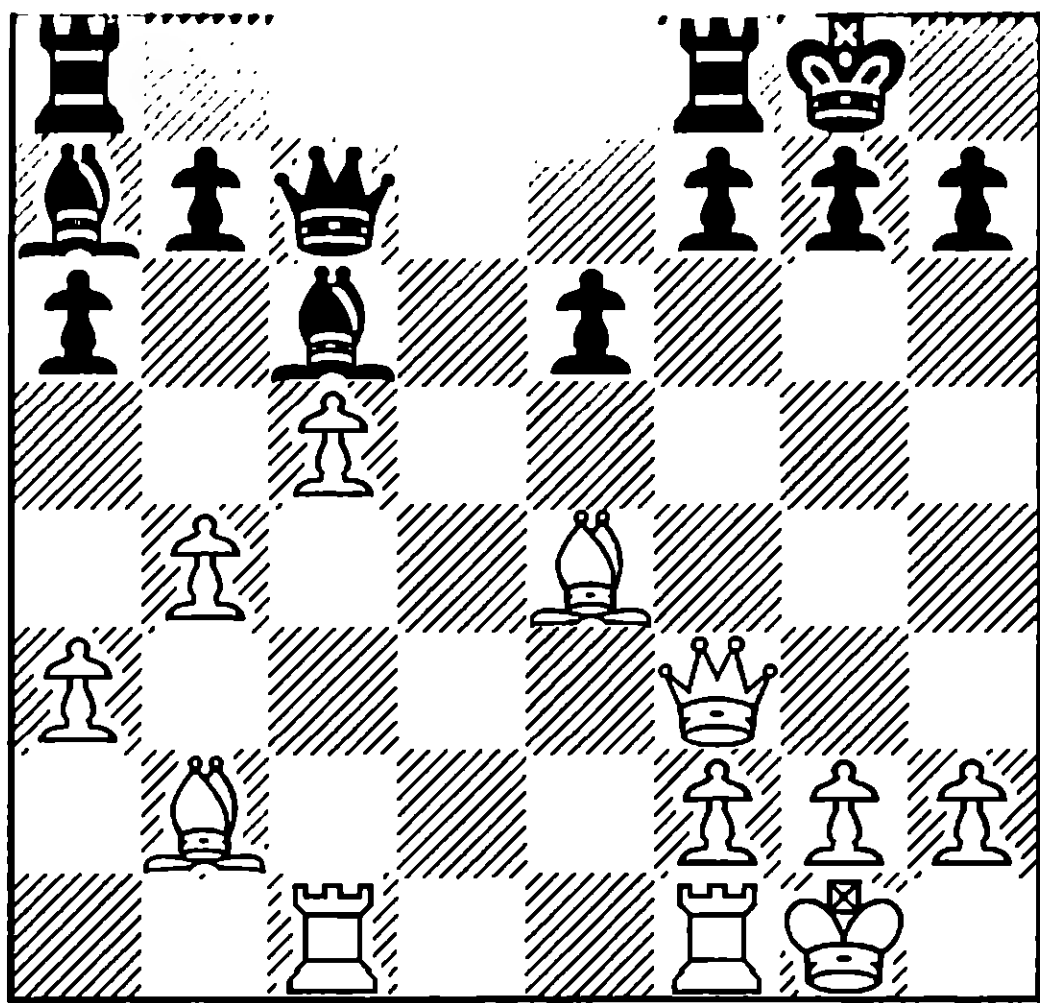
It is a fact, known but often not discussed, that we all miss combinations that are within our ability to see. If you

discuss a game with your opponent he will sometimes point out significant improvements, and chess software such as *Fritz* or *Shredder* is unforgiving by alerting us to every type of missed tactic. When a footballer is awarded a penalty he knows it is time to shoot, and a baseball player knows when the next pitch will be, but a chess combination can occur at any time and nobody lets you know. I feel that it would be a lot easier if someone did kindly tap you on the shoulder and declare “White to play and win in three”, and the majority of us might quite like that idea, but it won’t happen – so the key is to be alert all the time.

Therefore, I have to repeat the line that one should always be on the lookout for forcing moves and well-known combinations, and certainly contemplate whether your opponent has any tricks lined up himself. In an actual game it is easy to become lazy when analysing, to lose concentration and let slip the right combination that can dramatically change the game, especially since so many combinations *almost* work but don’t. This might explain the following position:

A.Miles-W.Browne Lucerne Olympiad 1982

Here the American grandmaster, Walter Browne, was guilty of carelessness and played a casual move:



Black to play

17...♖ad8?

Having just seeing the previous examples, it is a simple matter to find the combination and play like a star:

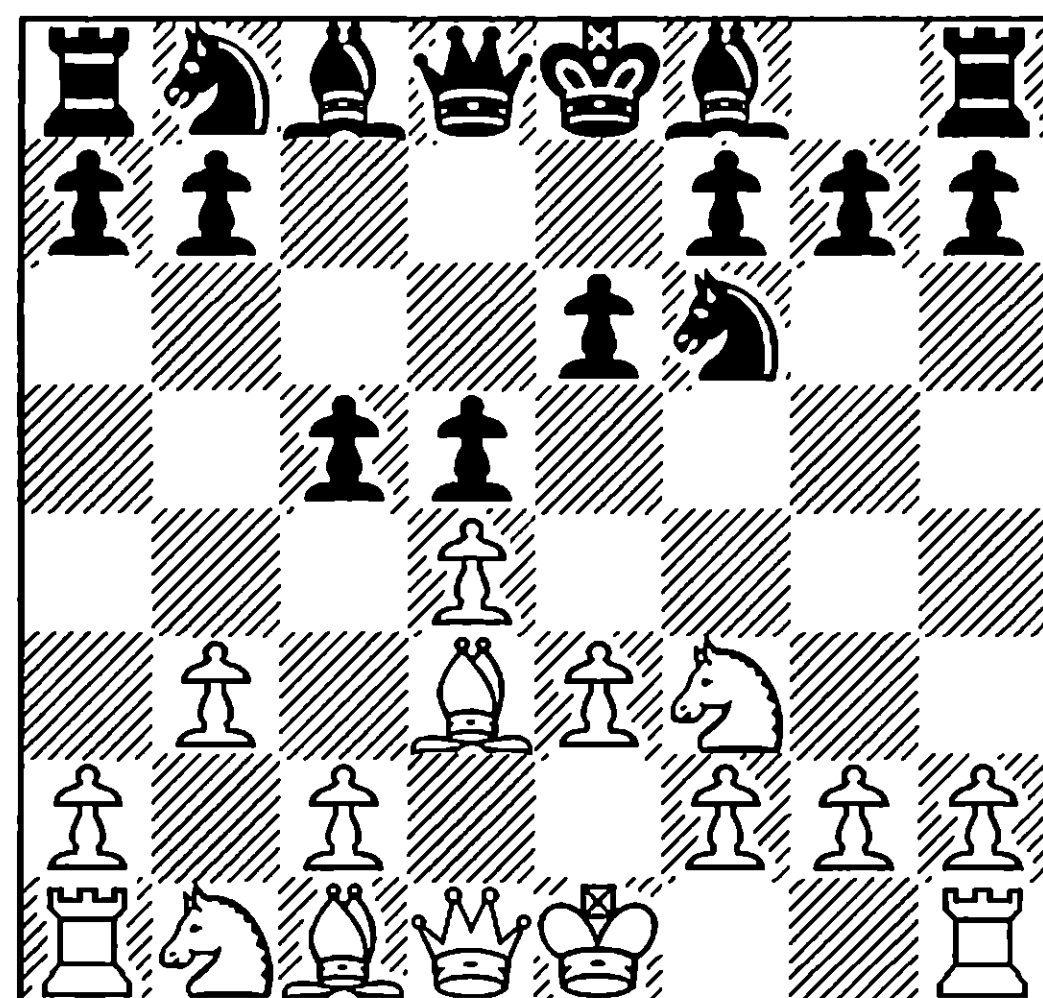
18 ♙xh7+! ♔xh7 19 ♚h5+ ♔g8 20 ♙xg7!! ♔xg7 21 ♚g5+ ♔h8 22 ♚f6+ ♔g8 23 ♖c4 1-0

The biggest complaint I hear from improvers always seems that they can just about spot the solution in puzzles, but they never actually reach such positions in their own games. It might be down to experience: after a while you develop a knack for not only defending against such tricks, but actually creating the situations where they flourish.

Game 36
L.Filatov-Stev.Mayer
Philadelphia 2000
Colle System

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♙d3 c5 5

b3



This is the standard position in the Colle-Zukertort and can be reached via various move orders. The pawns are placed on b3, d4 and e3; the knights are developed on d2 and f3; the light-squared bishop is well positioned on d3 where it controls the b1-h7 diagonal; the dark-squared bishop is placed on b2, helping to control the e5-square which is often later occupied by the king's knight.

5...♙e7 6 ♙b2 ♘bd7 7 ♘bd2 b6 8 0-0 ♙b7 9 ♚e2!?

White connects the rooks and contemplates e3-e4. I prefer the immediate 9 ♘e5 intending f2-f4, followed possibly by ♚f3.

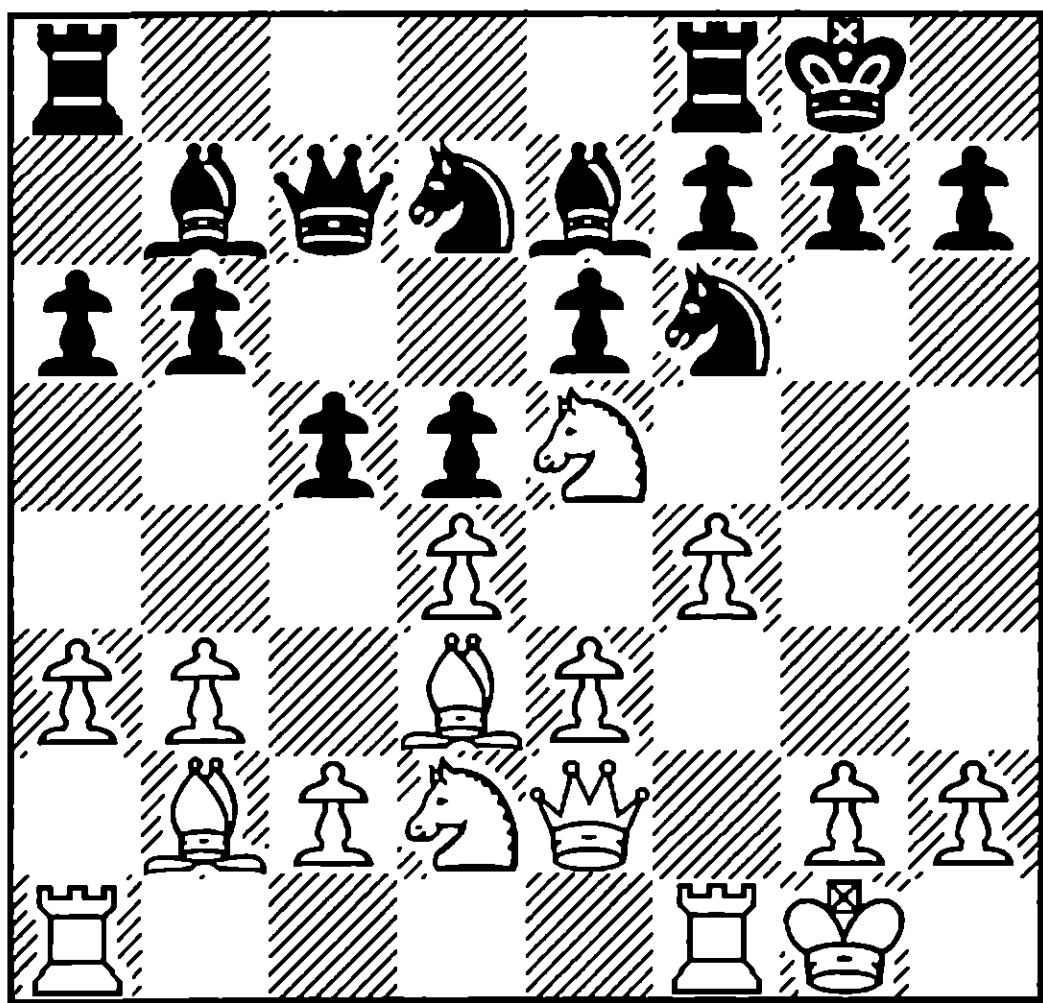
9...0-0 10 ♘e5 ♚c7 11 a3 a6

Black is not aware of any problems on the kingside and busies himself in preparing to advance his queenside pawns.

12 f4

This pawn formation is an important motif of the opening and occurs frequently. With pawns on d4, e3 and

f4 the knight on e5 is ably supported; it also introduces the possibility of queen or rook to f3 to help kick-start the attack. The attentive reader might notice that the ingredients needed to enjoy our favourite combination are in place, though a little adjustment is required to carry it out with success. Using *predict-a-move*, we can make a good guess as to what will happen next, considering Black has just played 11...a6.



12...b5

Mayer understandably continues with his plan of gaining space on the queenside.

13 ♖xd7!

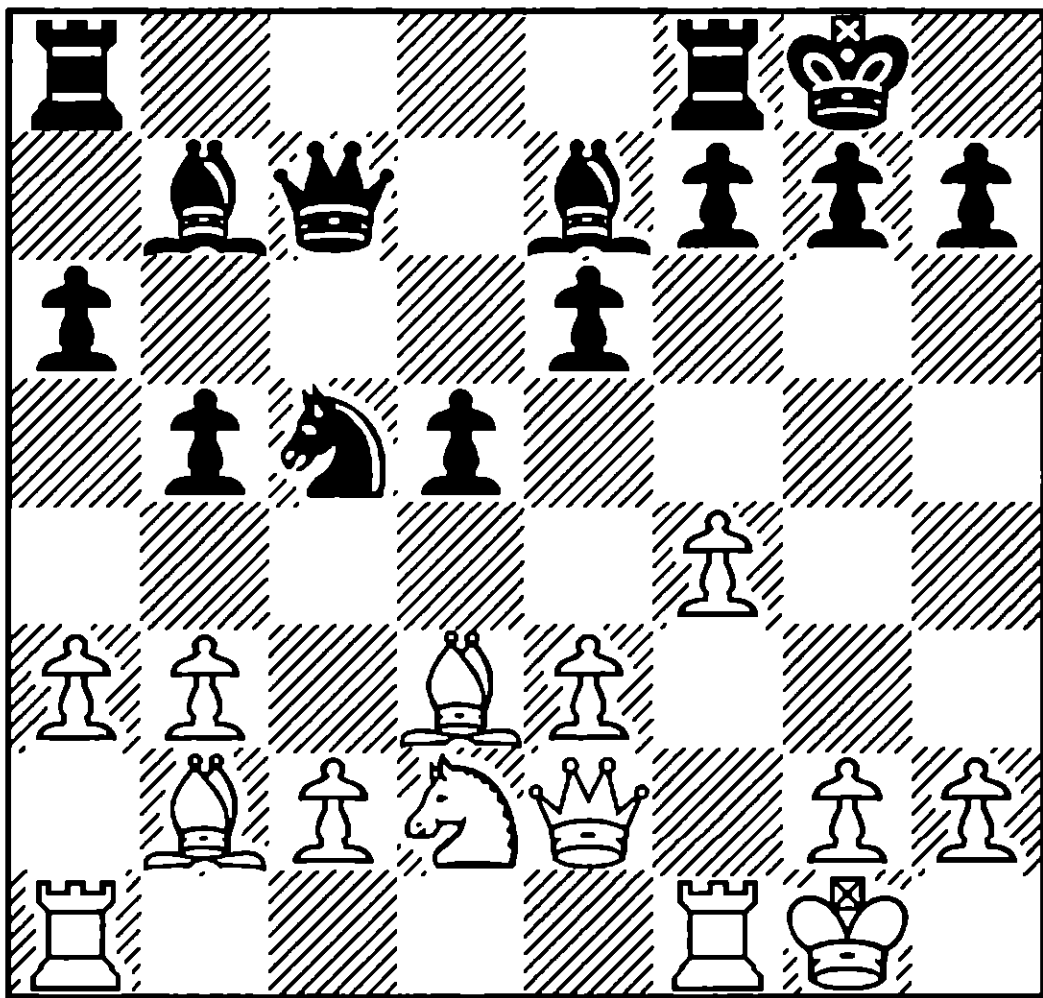
It appears that White is just exchanging pieces and there is nothing for Black to be worried about. The reality is that the pair of white bishops are well placed to be used in a combination and, once sufficient exchanges have been made, that can be a Lasker Attack.

13...♞xd7

The alternative 13...♞xd7 allows 14 dxc5, winning a pawn, since 14...♞xc5?

runs into 15 ♞x16 ♞x16 16 ♞xh7!! (once more the black pawns are stripped away as a prelude to a lightning attack) 16...♞xh7 17 ♞h5+ ♞g7 18 ♞g4+ ♞h7 19 ♞f3 and the ghost of the Lasker Attack is enough to force checkmate.

14 dxc5 ♞xc5?



Black's is oblivious to the upcoming storm and is just eager to exchange pieces on d3.

a) 14...♞xc5?! is only marginally an improvement in view of 15 ♞xh7+! ♞xh7 16 ♞h5+ ♞g8 17 ♞xg7! ♞xe3+ 18 ♞h1 f6 (not 18...♞xg7? 19 ♞g5+ ♞h8 20 ♞h6+ ♞g8 21 ♞f3 and Black is in big trouble) 19 ♞h6 (threatening ♞g6+) 19...♞e5 (not 19...♞xc2? 20 ♞f3 and wins) 20 ♞xf8 and White comes out on top. For example: 20...♞xd2 21 ♞b4 ♞xb4 22 fxe5 ♞f8 23 ♞xf6 or 20...♞xf8 21 fxe5 ♞xd2 22 ♞f3 ♞h7 23 ♞g4+ ♞h8 (or 23...♞g7 24 ♞xe6+ ♞f7 25 ♞d6) 24 ♞h3 ♞h6 25 ♞h5 ♞g7 26 ♞f1 f5 27 ♞ff3 f4 28 ♞c3! ♞f7 29 ♞h4 followed by ♞ch3.

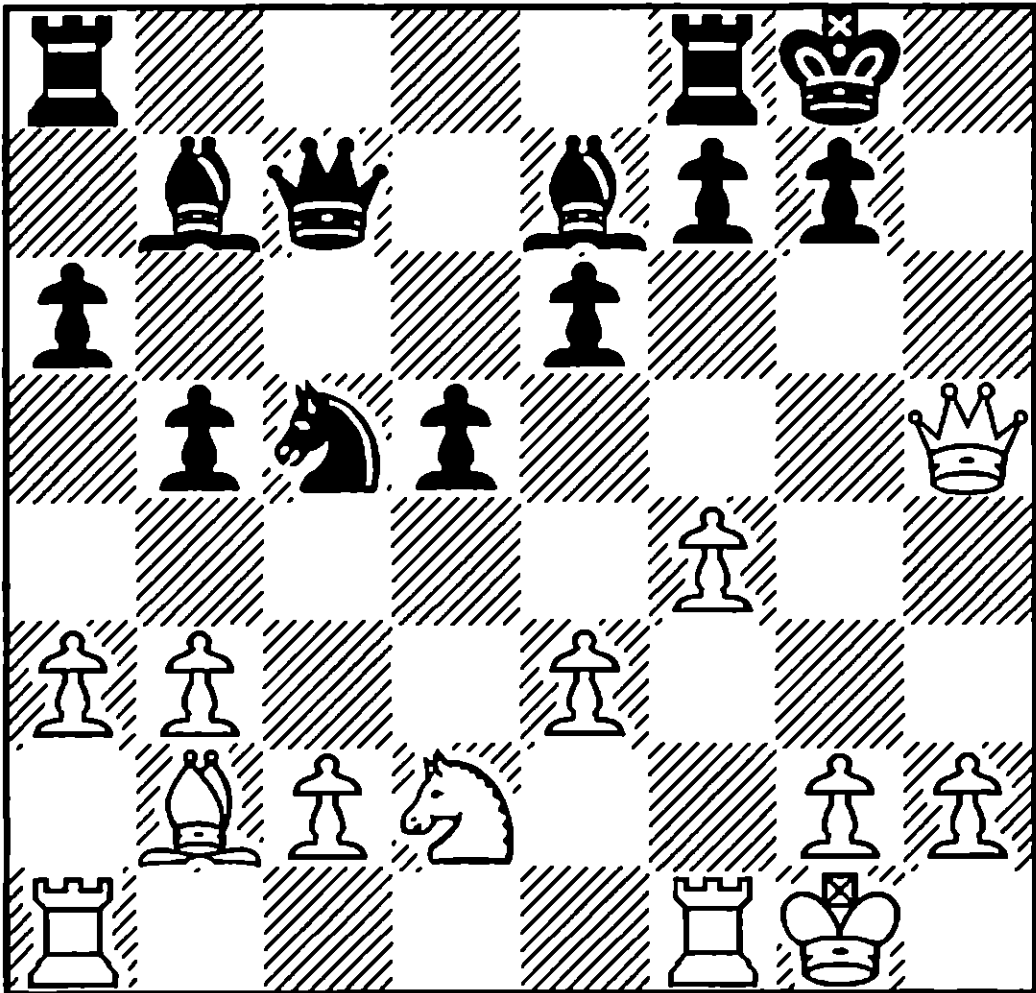
b) 14...♞xc5! was correct, when 15

♖xh7 1 ♖xh7 16 ♜h5 1 ♗g8 17 ♖xg7 is thwarted by 17...♜xc3+ 18 ♖h1 ♖xg7 19 ♜f3 d4! and White has no more than a draw; or if 15 ♖d4 ♜c7 16 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 17 ♜h5+ ♖g8 18 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 19 ♜g4+ ♖h8 20 ♜f3, then 20...♘f6 21 ♜h3+ ♘h7 defends. But of course White is not obliged to sacrifice and could just continue to build up with, say, 16 ♜f3 and ♜h3 with the better chances.

15 ♖xh7+!

This is spectacular, but once you learn the pattern it should come quite naturally.

15...♖xh7 16 ♜h5+ ♖g8



17 ♖xg7 ♖xg7

17...f6 is strongly met by 18 ♜g6, when 18...♜f7 19 ♖h6+ ♖h8 20 ♜xf7 is deadly.

18 ♜g4+ 1-0

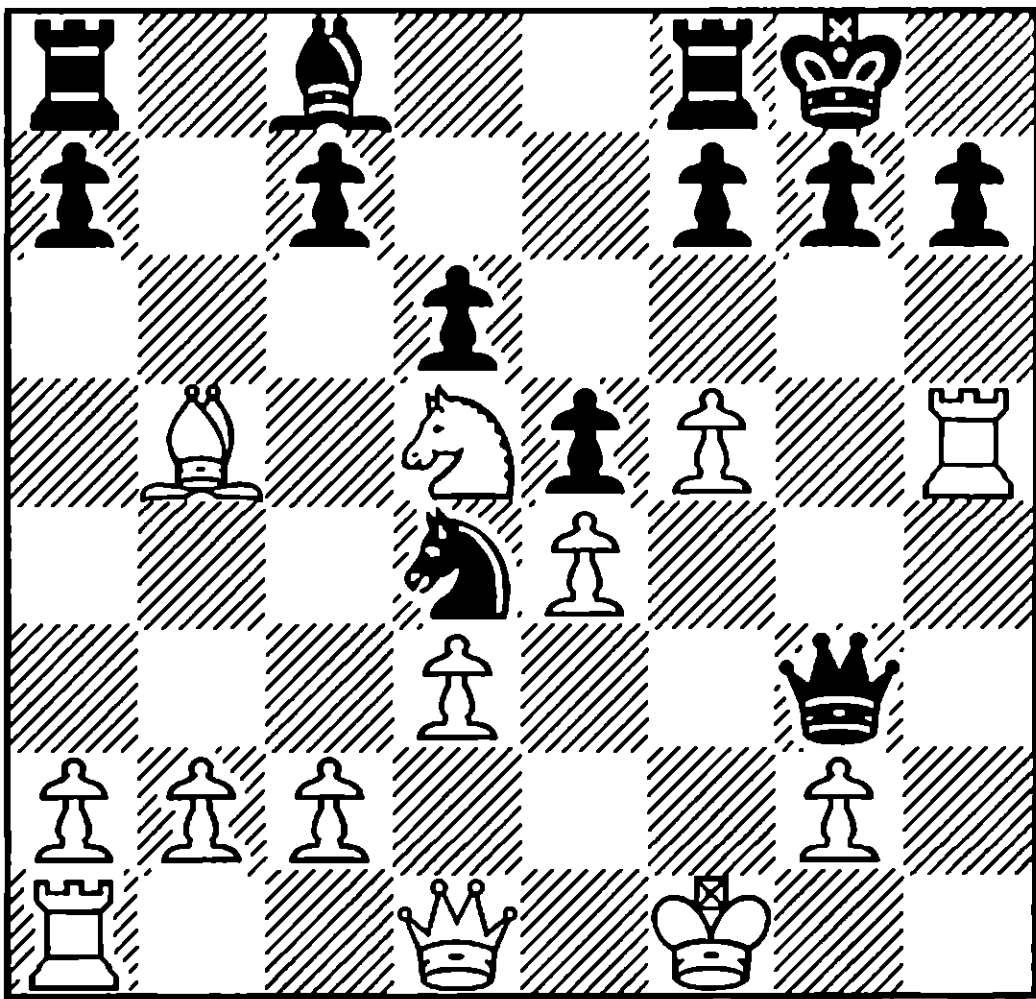
Black resigned in view of the now familiar 18...♖h8 19 ♜f3 and ♜h3+, winning.

Before anyone rushes off and tries to achieve the Lasker Attack in each

and every game, I should explain that the idea is not to propose this particular combination as a regular attacking weapon, but rather to give a taste of how easy it is to become aware of even quite complex checkmates once you get used to them. In time you should get almost a sixth sense when they appear at the board.

Here is another example of how we can train ourselves to raise our rating:

A.Susterman-K.Mar
 European Women's
 Championship, Chisinau 2005



White to play

This might look like a tricky position, but when you are in the know it all becomes very easy:

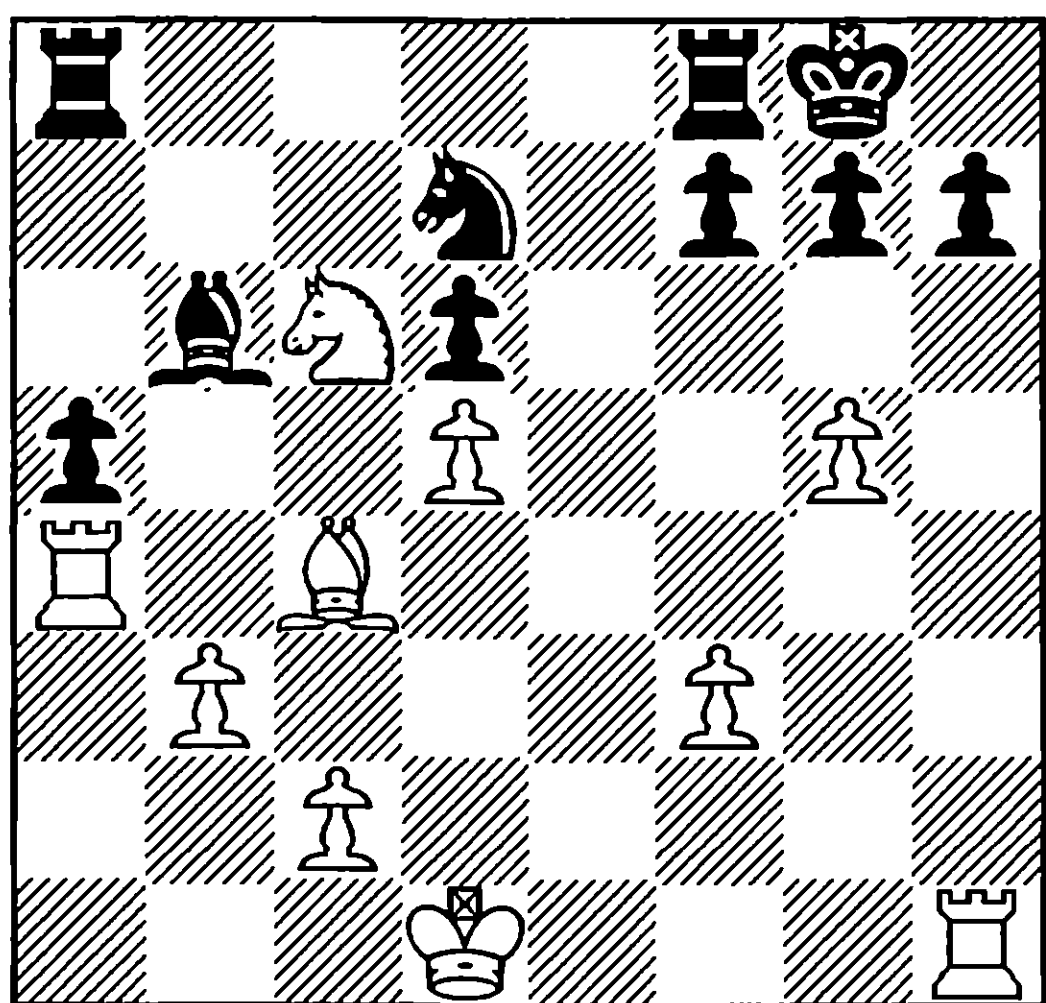
16 ♘e7+ ♖h8 17 ♜xh7+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 17...♖xh7 18 ♜h5 mate.

The knowledge of this trick sud-

denly opens up other avenues of attack that you might previously have overlooked:

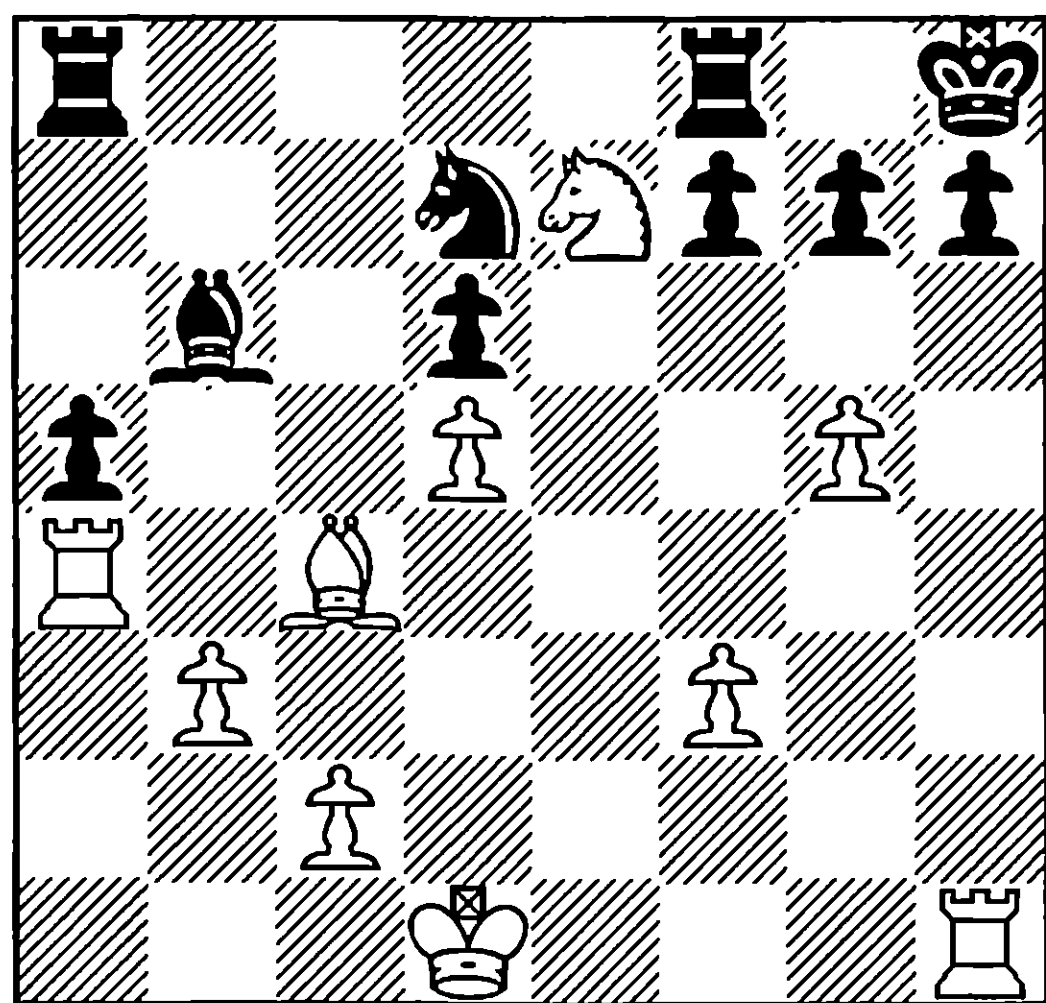
C.Davila-K.Saed
Bled Olympiad 2002



White to play

Again this might seem a difficult position to assess initially, but knowledge of the mating pattern makes it much easier to find the right way forward.

31 ♖e7+ ♔h8



32 ♗b5!

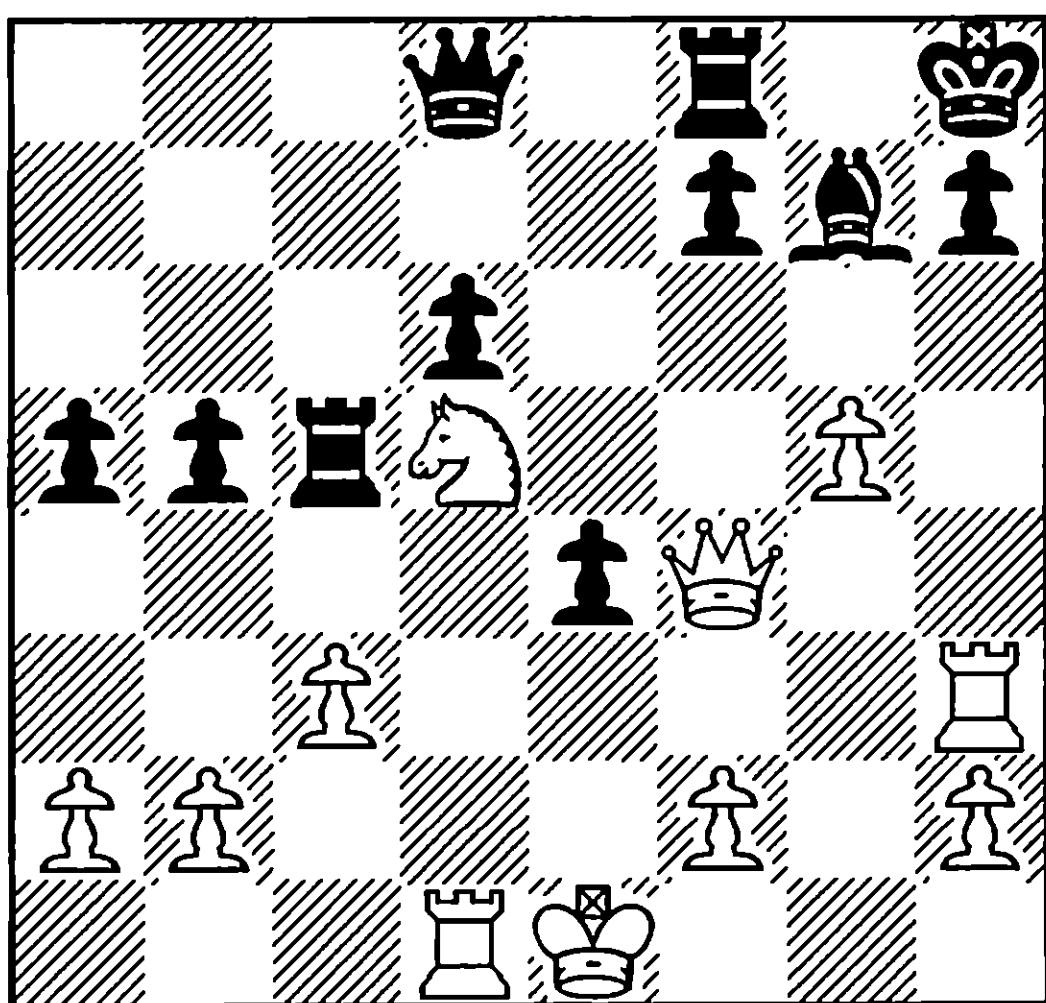
The bishop attacks the black knight, while making way for the rook on a4 to swing across to the kingside.

32... ♞e5 33 ♖xh7+ 1-0

Since 33... ♔xh7 34 ♖h4+ is mate.

Here is another reminder of how it can work wonders:

D.Coleman-J.De Lagontrie
London 2009



Black to play

White is preparing 26 ♖h4 to threaten mate on h7, but there is still plenty of play in the position because Black can, for instance, make ready to move his queen into the defence via f5. One line might be 25... ♔d7 (note that here the queen also covers the e7-square) 26 ♖h4 h6! 27 gxh6 ♕e5 and although White is better, there is still a lot of work to do before victory is ensured.

So what would happen if the queen moved to a different square, such as:

25...♔c8?

The answer is easy if you know the mating pattern:

26 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 27 ♔h4+ ♔g8 28 ♘e7 mate

It is time to see how such a glorious combination can work in action, by observing how such a position can be created when you have the experience to know what to go for:

Game 37
J.Nogueiras Santiago-
M.Todorovic
 Dos Hermanas
 (internet blitz) 2005
London System

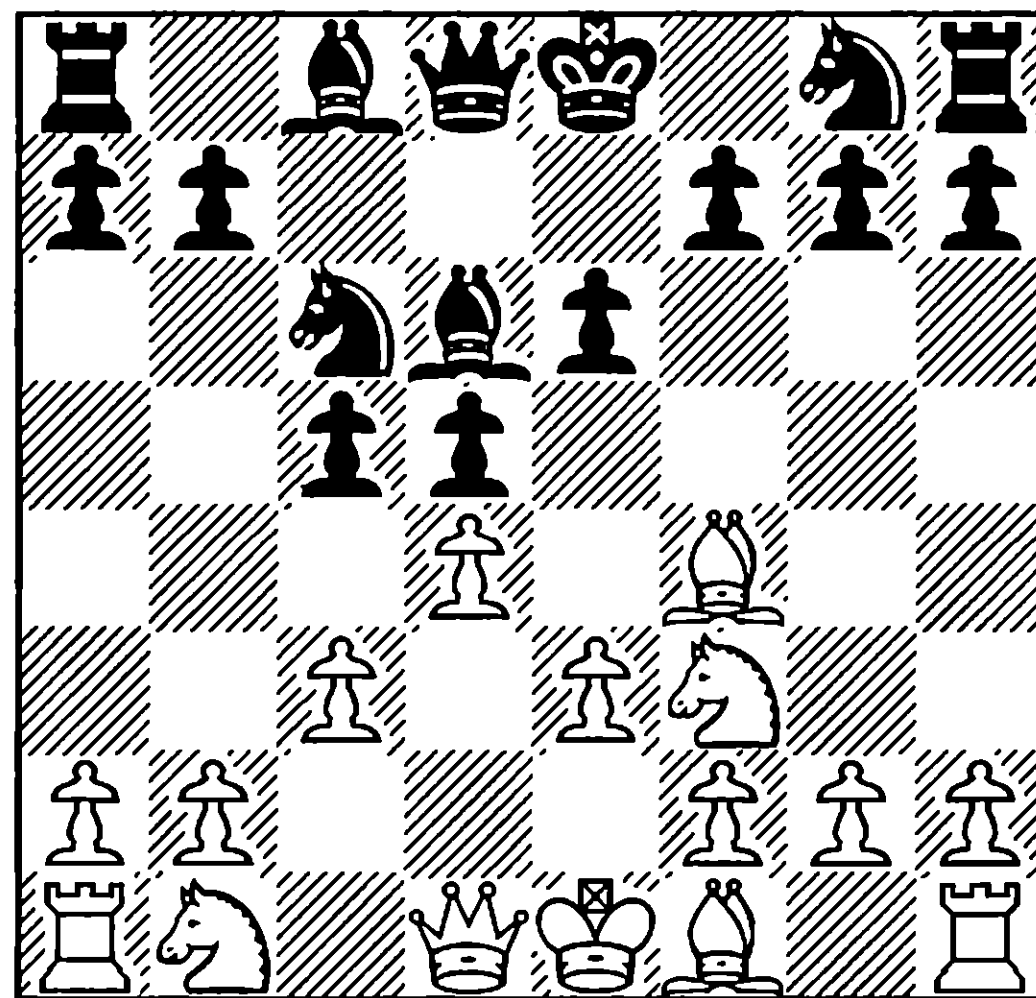
1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4

This is the modern way of playing the London System, as opposed to the traditional 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4. One of the reasons for the immediate bishop deployment is that the line 2 ♘f3 c5 is avoided, while the delay in developing the king's knight also allows the d4-pawn to be secured with a quick e2-e3 or c2-c3 in certain circumstances.

2...c5 3 e3 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 e6 5 c3 ♖d6

Black contests the centre, wary of allowing White to have everything all his own way by installing a knight on e5 followed by ♗f1-d3 and castling kingside – a similar method of attack as in

the Colle System that appeared in the previous main game.



6 ♗g3 ♘f6 7 ♘bd2

White is just catching up on development, while binding his time before deciding where to deploy the light-squared bishop.

7...0-0 8 ♗b5

I might fancy playing ♗d3 to target the h7-pawn, but White has another idea of how to form the attack. The plan is to take the knight on c6, then play ♘f3-e5 with thoughts of f2-f4.

8...♗xg3 9 hxg3

The doubled pawns are nothing to worry about as the h-file is now open for White's rook. Normally this makes little difference because White has already castled kingside, but perhaps the Yugoslav grandmaster playing Black underestimated the danger that the change in circumstances has created.

9...♔d6 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 11 ♘e5

The position is already looking promising for White, and a lot of that can be attributed to knowledge of typical plans in the opening. The motif of planting a

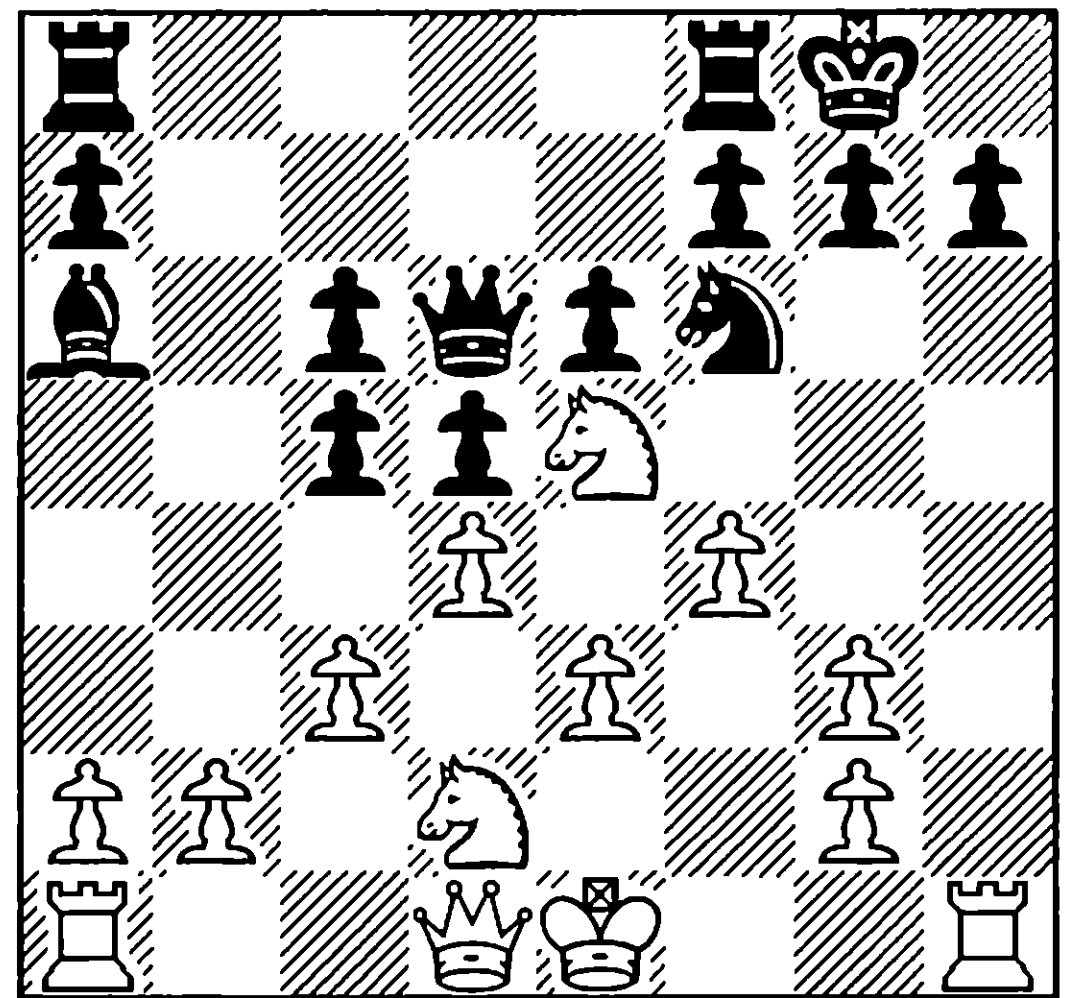
knight on e5 supported by the bishop is fundamental in so many lines, and the bonus of having a semi-open h-file means that even more attacking options come into the equation.

A theme of this book is that if you want to use openings to increase your chance of preparing an attack, there is a real need to know some background, and learning some important games in your opening is a good and easy way to improve. It reminds me of the time a promising junior surprised me by playing the London System, but after a few moves failed to make the most of his position. Later I asked him when he learned the opening and he was proud to reply “last night using the database”. This is an increasing problem as people use a computer to take up openings and just as rapidly drop them when something goes wrong. It might be fine for an elite grandmaster such as Magnus Carlsen to use his photographic memory to play something new and use his world-class talent to deploy it, but the rest of us mere mortals need to understand our openings.

11...♗a6 12 f4

Once again, such a move comes naturally if you know this opening, as the advance of the f-pawn is a standard way of supporting the knight. It is worth looking at the position on move 12 in the previous Colle game, Filatov-Mayer, to see the benefit of having a strong knight on e5, and how knowing a plan in the opening can make a real

difference when trying to reach a position where an attack can take place.



12...♖ab8 13 b3?

White is already paying too much attention to his kingside possibilities, because this move is a mistake which allows Black to engineer some counterplay. 13 ♕a4 would be more precise, when 13...♗b5 can surprisingly be met by 14 ♕xa7; note that the queen is not trapped since it can retreat via c5.

13...cxd4 14 exd4 c5 15 g4 cxd4 16 cxd4 ♞e4?

Here 16...♕b4! would have been very strong, since White’s planned 17 g5 would run into 17...♕xd4! 18 gxf6 ♕e3+ and mates.

17 g5

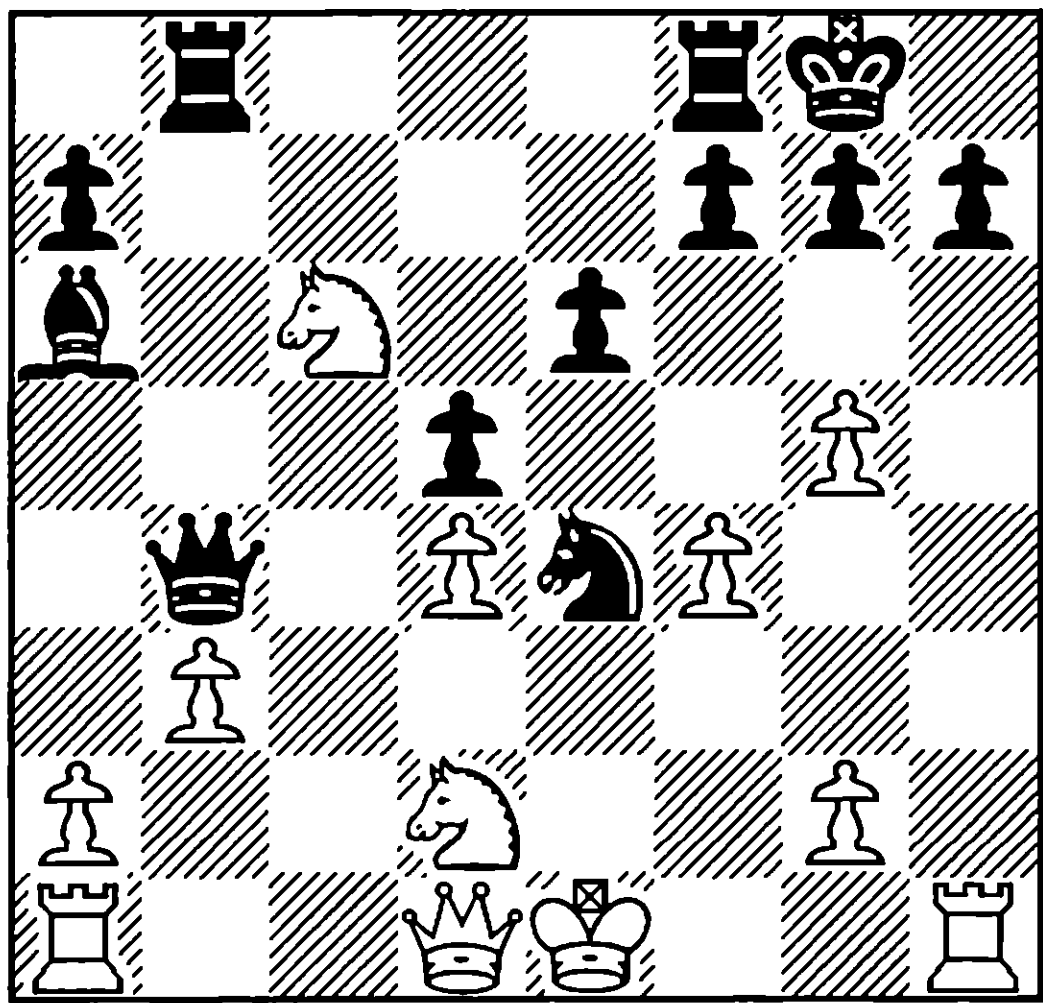
Now Black has to answer the threat of ♕d1-h5.

17...♕b4?

It is interesting that even a strong player can overlook simple tricks during the tension of a game (of course the quick time limit doesn’t help). A better idea is 17...f6, trying to oust the strong knight from its perch on e5.

White would have to reply 18 Rxf7, when 18...g6 (not 18...Rxf7? 19 Wh5+ Kg8 20 g6 and wins) 19 Rd7 Wb4 20 Nc6 Wb5 21 Ne7+ Kg7 22 Nc6+ Rf7 23 gxf6+ or 18...Ng3 19 Rxf7+! Kxf7 20 exf6+ Rxf6 21 Wg4+ Kh7 22 Wxf3 is quite unclear.

18 Nc6



Black has positively encouraged this fork because he has a cunning plan for when White takes the rook on b8.

18...c3? 19 Ne7+!

It is easy to play like a master when you have the knowledge. After 19 Nxb8?? the answer is 19...Wg3 mate.

19...Kh8 20 Rxf7+! 1-0

I think it is clear that looking at such chess patterns will significantly increase your knowledge of tactical tricks and traps, which will then come naturally to you when playing your own games. Here are a few tips to help you:

1. Look at chess puzzles.

The mating patterns and combinational motifs occur time and time

again, so absorbing them will increase your level of play.

2. Search for forcing moves.

A basic search for possible combinations should focus on checks, a threat to give checkmate, and threats to take material.

3. Predict-a-move.

Think of a plan, set up a trap, and watch your opponent carry on with the obvious reply which will allow you to execute it.

4. Check the move-order.

An attack can fall down if the move order is messed up. It is good discipline to find the exact solution in puzzles or published games, because all too often a promising position can be spoiled by not paying close attention to precise calculation.

5. Cash in your chips.

A reminder that a brilliant win is something that everybody revels in, but there comes a time when you should admit that the attack is fading and cash in by winning material.

Repeating Chess Openings

I expect players will seek out attacking chances at every opportunity, but one way to tip the scales in your favour is to understand the ideas behind your opening. I find a good test when coaching someone is to ask them to show me

their favourite master game in that particular opening; for example, a win by Anand, Carlsen or Kasparov. Far too many times an improving player has shrugged and admitted they only know roughly the first ten moves, having looked them up in a reference book or glanced at the opening key on the computer database. It is true that such basic knowledge can get you to a certain level, but if you want to improve it really does help to know a few background games, and being familiar with the sort of opening tricks that are on offer after move ten can make quite a difference in the long run.

The first time that I clearly remember the influence of knowing complete games was when I wanted a change from my usual 1 e4 and decided to try my luck with another opening. A friend was always carrying around a book by Raymond Keene entitled *Nimzowitsch/Larsen Attack* about 1 b3. I thought that was worth investigating further and, even better, I was able to borrow it. I was further seduced by the selection of games in which White seemed to win in style time after time. In the first few pages the following game caught my eye and, as luck would have it, that turned out to be quite significant.

“The great master places a knight on e5, checkmate follows by itself.” – a comment by an impressed spectator to a game by Ossip Bernstein in Paris

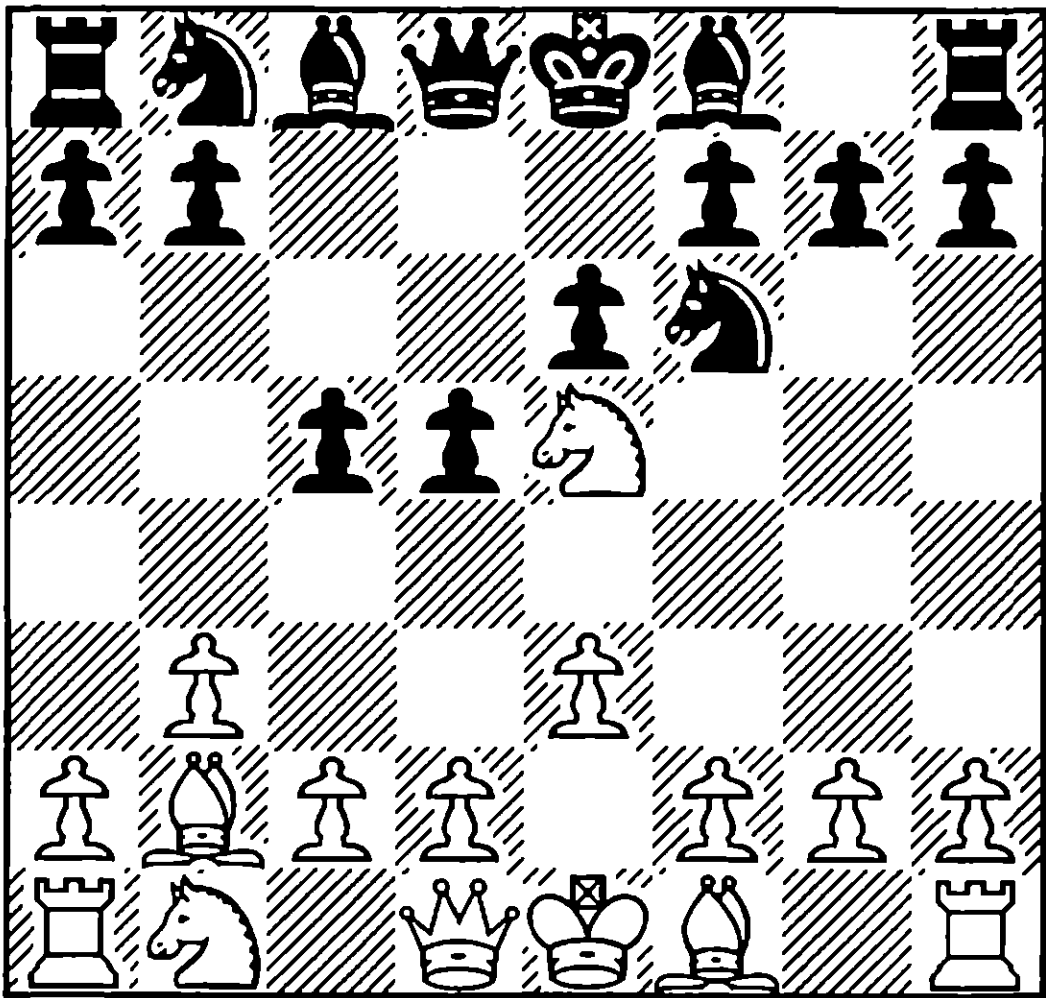
1933, quoted by grandmaster and writer Savielly Tartakower in *L’Echiquier*, 1934.

Game 38
J.Kaplan-C.Pritchett
Skopje Olympiad 1972
Nimzo-Larsen Attack

1 ♖f3 c5 2 b3

There are a number of ways to play this line, but some players don’t like 1 b3 because of the reply 1...e5, so starting with 1 ♖f3 prevents that possibility.

2...d5 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♙b2 e6 5 ♘e5



As in the Colle and London System games above, a theme in the Nimzo-Larsen is to plant a knight on e5 and then support it with f2-f4. This allows options such as castling kingside followed by ♖f3-g3 or h3, as well as ♙d1-f3, with obvious attacking ambitions.

5...♙e7 6 f4 0-0 7 ♙d3

I was impressed by this idea of lining up the bishops against the king-

side, which was a clear indication that White is preparing to attack.

7...b6 8 g4!?

It is a risky decision to storm forward on the kingside because the standard retort of opening up the centre is still possible. However, the Puerto Rican board one is playing aggressively, and this can be problematic for the defender who has to cope with a completely new position within ten moves.

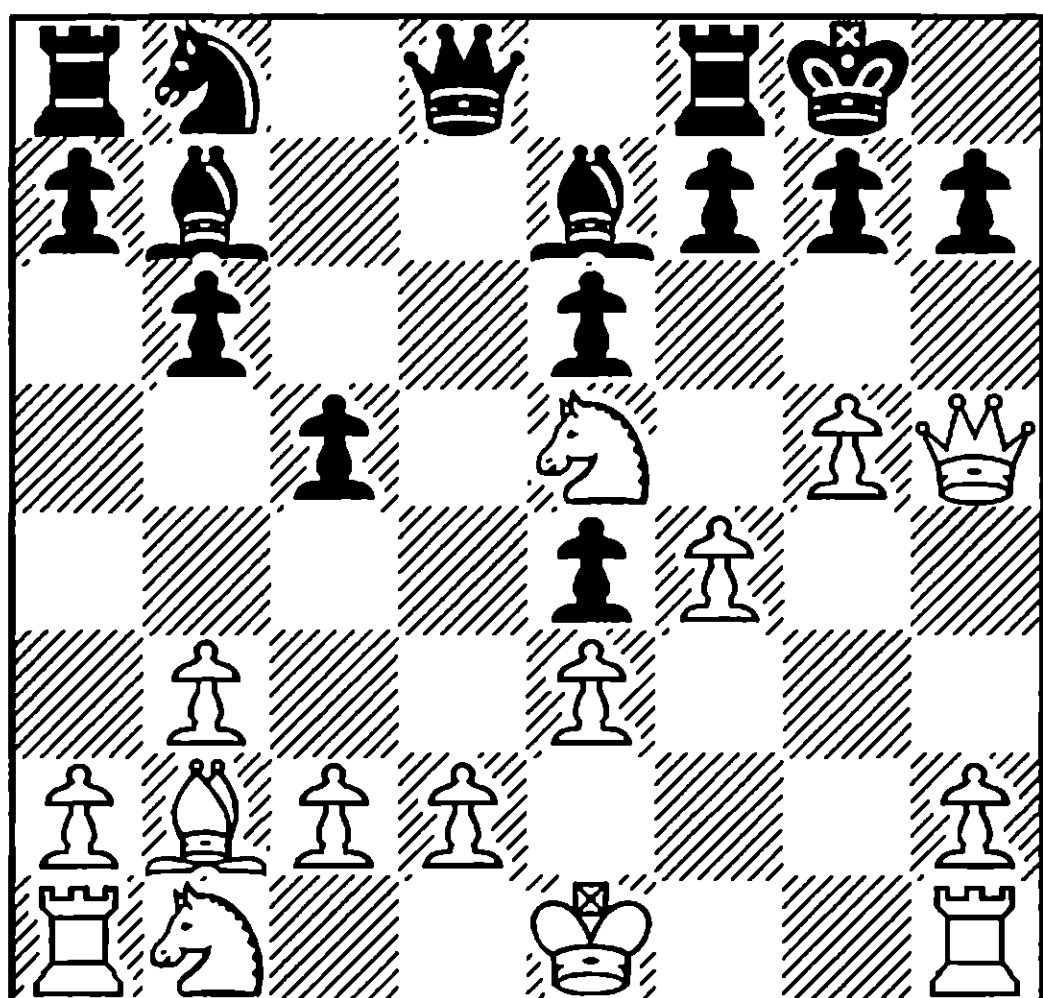
8...♙b7 9 g5 ♘e4

The logic behind Black's queenside fianchetto is to fight for control of the e4-square, so blocking the bishop on d3 makes sense.

10 ♙xe4!

A sensible precaution to rule out the possibility of ...d5-d4.

10...dxe4 11 ♔h5



The first time I saw this position I thought it was fantastic and agreed with the book that Black is probably lost. That feeling still persists, although the magic box does tend to find superior defensive tries, so perhaps nothing is clear cut at this stage. All the same,

the practical difficulties are immense and, if the Scottish number one could not cope, it is fair to assume that the majority of players will struggle to find the right route out of this mess.

11...♘c6 12 ♘g4 e5!?

An understandable reaction to the variety of threats, especially as the theme of ♔g1 and then ♘f6+ looks deadly.

Instead, 12...♘b4 is the computer choice, with the astonishing idea 13 ♔g1 ♘xc2+ 14 ♔f2 ♘d4! – how many casual players would come up with this sacrifice, rather than grabbing the rook with 14...♘xa1? and succumbing to a forced mate (15 ♘f6+! ♙xf6 16 gxf6 g6 17 ♔h6 etc)? However, after the simple 13 ♘a3! it is not clear that Black has really gained anything from his knight sally.

13 fxe5

Just accepting the extra pawn with 13 ♘xe5 was also good.

13...♙xg5?

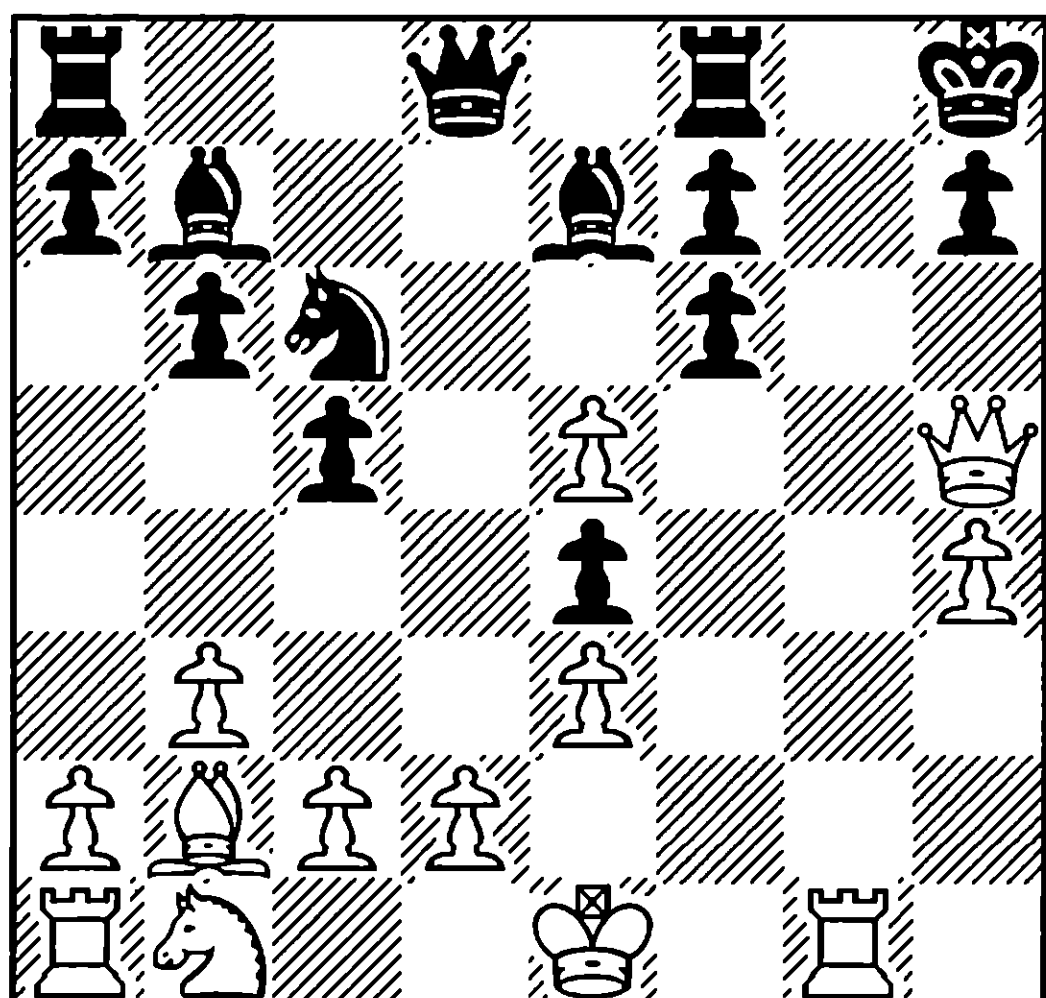
Black wins his pawn back but at a significant cost: the g-file is opened which should cost him dearly with precise play. His best chance at this stage was probably 13...g6, and if 14 ♔h6, then 14...♙xg5 15 ♘f6+ ♔xf6!, although after 16 ♔xf8+ and 17 exf6 he is just the exchange down.

14 h4 ♙e7 15 ♘c3?

The brilliancy is spoiled by this inaccuracy, which should allow Black to survive a lot longer. In a way I can't help feeling that he was using a sort of

predict a move method, because the most obvious reply to secure the e4-pawn loses and Black duly obliges.

The stunning 15 ♖f6+! is the right path to victory: 15...gxf6 (of course 15...♔h8? allows 16 ♕xh7 mate, while 15...♙xf6 16 gxf6 and 17 ♕g5 is equally hopeless) 16 ♖g1+ ♔h8 and now:



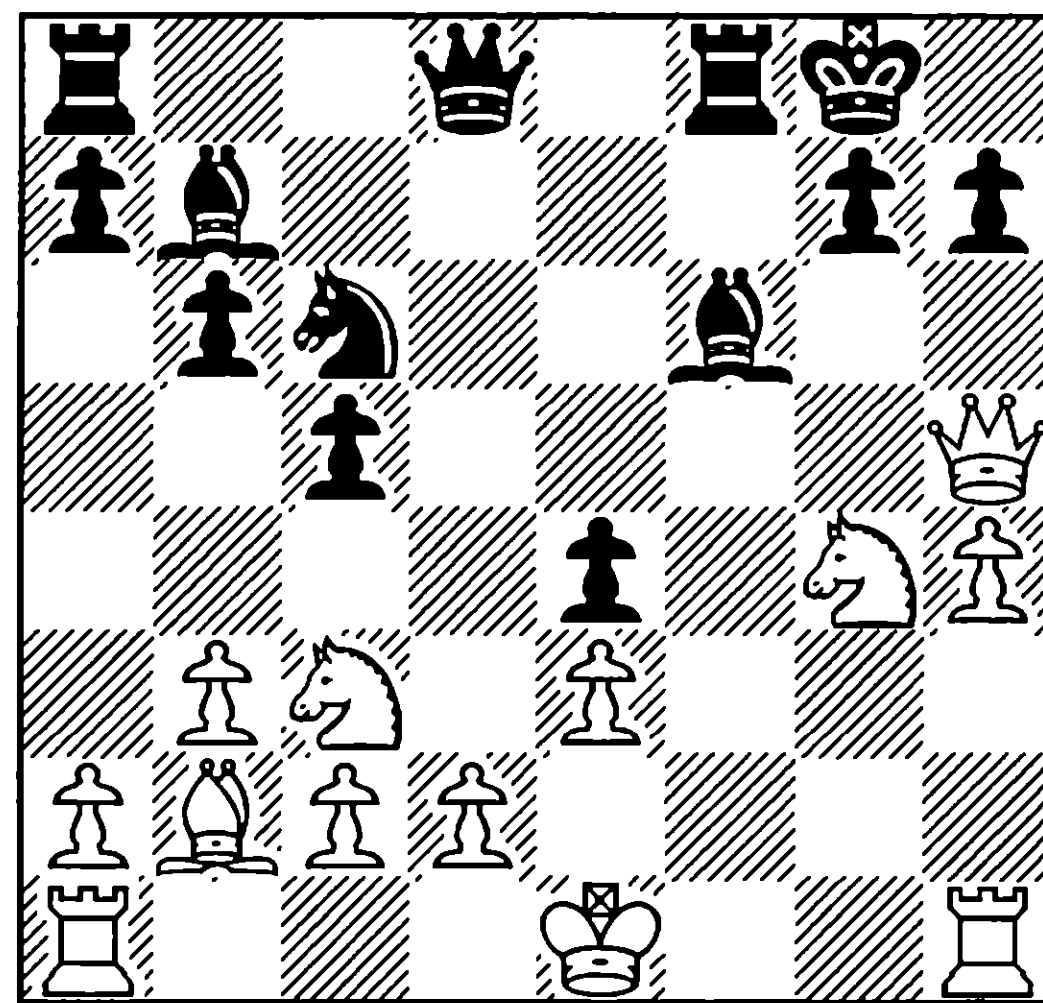
17 ♖g7!! – it is understandable that White missed this tactical shot when trying to look ahead, but with so many forcing moves available it is hardly a surprise that the exposed black king is in trouble. After the forced 17...♔xg7 18 exf6+ ♙xf6 (18...♔h8 19 fxe7+ f6 20 exd8♕ is just embarrassing for Black) 19 ♕g5+ ♔h8 20 ♙xf6+, White wins.

15...f5?

A routine reply to defend the e-pawn but it is seriously flawed. It was better to play 15...g6 16 ♕h6 and only then 16...f5, when 17 exf6 ♙xf6 18 ♖xe4? (as in the game) 18...♙xf6 19 ♖g5 fails to 19...♕d7, covering the vital h7-pawn and leaving White completely lost; or if 18 h5, then 18...♙g7 (not 18...♙g5? 19 ♖xe4! ♙xh6 20 ♖xh6

mate) 19 ♖e2 ♕c7! and Black defends. True, after 18 ♖xf6 ♕xf6 19 0-0-0 ♖e5 20 ♖hg1 Black looks very vulnerable on the long diagonal, but at least he is not losing at once.

16 exf6 ♙xf6



17 ♖xe4!

White clearly had this in mind when he played 15 ♖c3.

17...♖d4

Arguably the only way to keep on fighting. If Black takes the bishop with 17...♙xb2, then 18 ♖g5 is a killer move; e.g. 18...h6 19 ♖xh6+! gxh6 (or 19...♔h8 20 ♖f5+) 20 ♕g6+ and 21 ♕h7 mate.

18 ♖gxf6+

Kaplan now cashes in his chips by trading the attack for a material gain.

18...♖xf6

After 18...gxf6 19 ♖g1+ ♔h8 20 0-0-0 White is clearly on top because his king is safer and the attack is still going strong. One finish would be 20...♙xe4 21 exd4 cxd4 22 ♕g4 ♕e7 23 ♖ge1 f5 24 ♙xd4+ ♖f6 25 ♕g5 ♖af8 26 ♖xe4! fxe4 27 ♖f1 and Black can resign.

19 ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 20 ♙xd4 cxd4 21 ♖f1

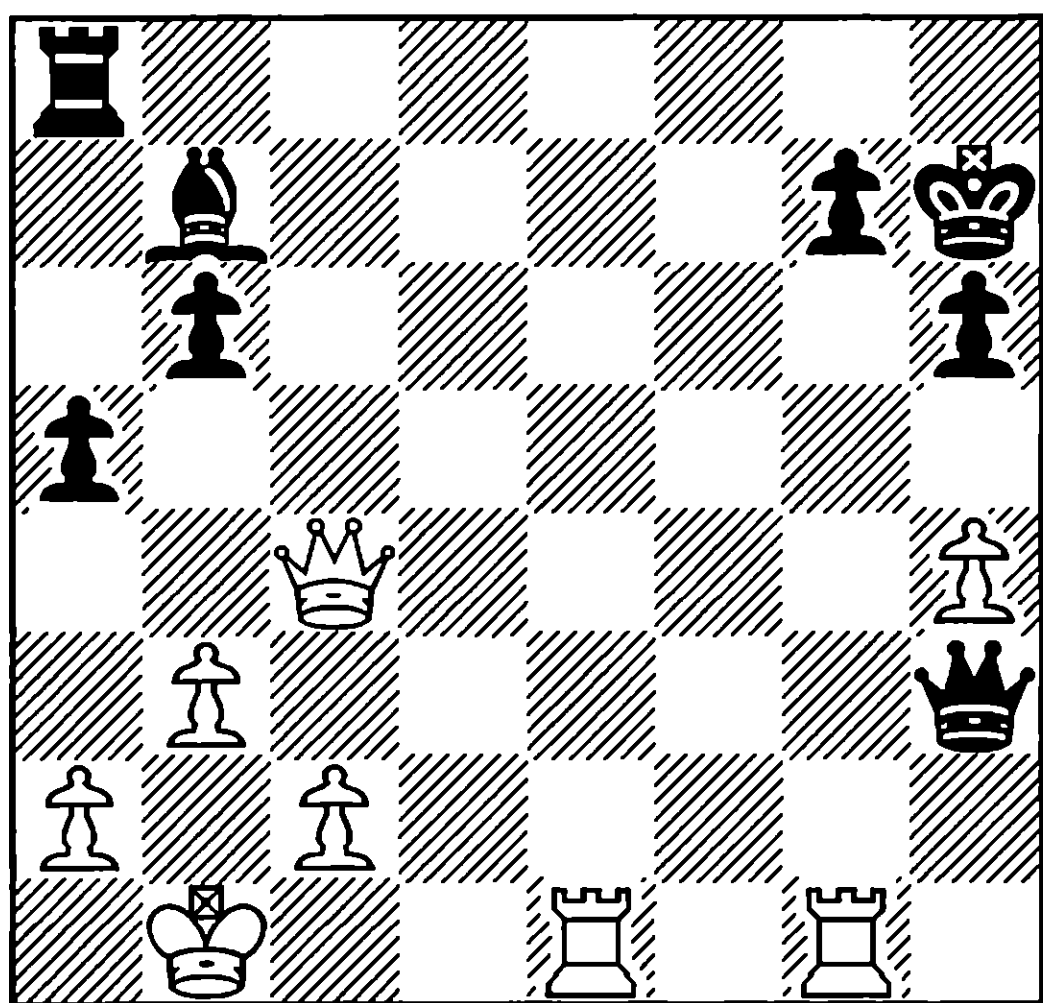
♔e7 22 0-0-0

The king is whisked to safety, leaving White the exchange ahead and ready to exert further pressure with his heavy pieces.

22...a5

22...dxe3 23 dxe3 ♔xe3+ might win a pawn back, but allowing White's rooks to infiltrate eases his passage to victory; for example, 24 ♔b1 ♕e6 (otherwise a rook will swoop down to the d7-square) 25 ♖fe1 ♕c8 26 ♖e7 and Black should put the pieces back in the box.

23 ♕b5 dxe3 24 dxe3 ♔xe3+ 25 ♔b1 h6 26 ♕c4+ ♔h7 27 ♖de1 ♕h3 28 ♖g1



White is winning but he still needs to finish the job. The immediate threat appears to be 29 ♖e7 so Black responds with the obvious move, allowing another *predict-a-move* situation.

28...♖c8 29 ♖xg7+! ♔xg7

If 29...♔h8, then 30 ♖h7+! insists.

30 ♖e7+ ♔f6

Or 30...♔h8 31 ♕d4+ ♔g8 32 ♕g7 mate.

31 ♕f7 mate

This impressive display helped me to decide to give 1 b3 a go, and by chance my first opponent walked right into it:

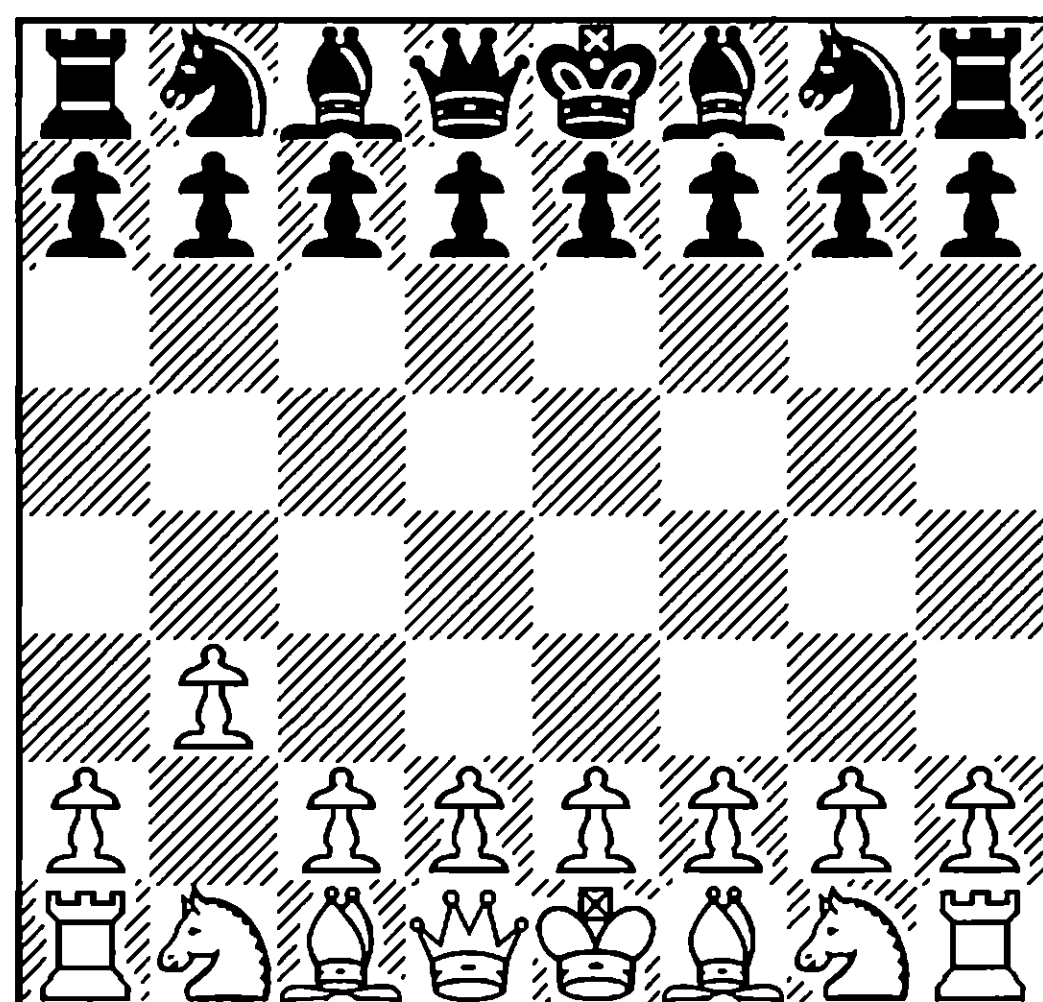
Game 39

G.Lane-P.Korning

Hastings 1982

Nimzo-Larsen Attack

1 b3



This opening has been known for a long time and is mentioned by Lucena in 1497, but the modern way of handling it has mainly been developed in the last 100 years. Aaron Nimzowitsch (1886-1935) was one of the best players in the world, so his adoption of the opening brought it to the attention of a larger audience (though he mostly used the 1 ♘f3 move order). It was later refined by Bent Larsen in the 1960/70s (who did play 1 b3). Hence the name “Nimzo-Larsen”, in honour of two famous players.

1...d5 2 ♘b2 e6 3 e3 ♘f6 4 f4

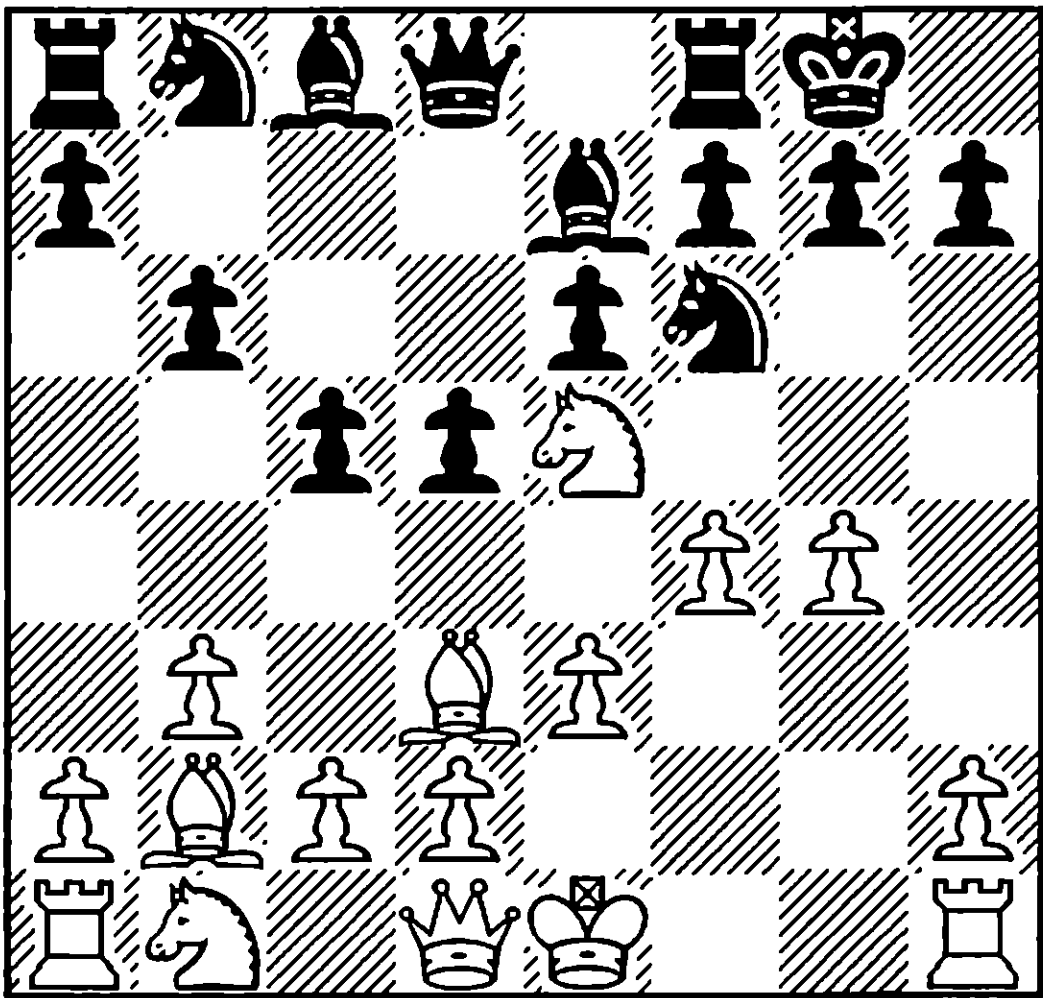
I could only vaguely recollect the Kaplan game, but knowing that I had to install a knight on e5 against Black's pawn set-up allowed me to form a decent plan.

4...♙e7 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♙d3

I clearly remember gaining a large amount of time on the clock as my opponent started thinking about what to do against such an obvious attacking formation.

6...c5 7 ♘e5 b6 8 g4

This might have been difficult to find at the board, but knowledge of the earlier game swiftly inspired me to emulate such attacking play.



8...♙b7

It seems Kaplan's original line still impresses, as I discovered a number of other games where White played to win in the opening with great success:

a) 8...♘fd7 to challenge the influence of the centralized knight is logical, but White can still maintain the king-side pressure with 9 g5 in an effort to see if Black cracks:

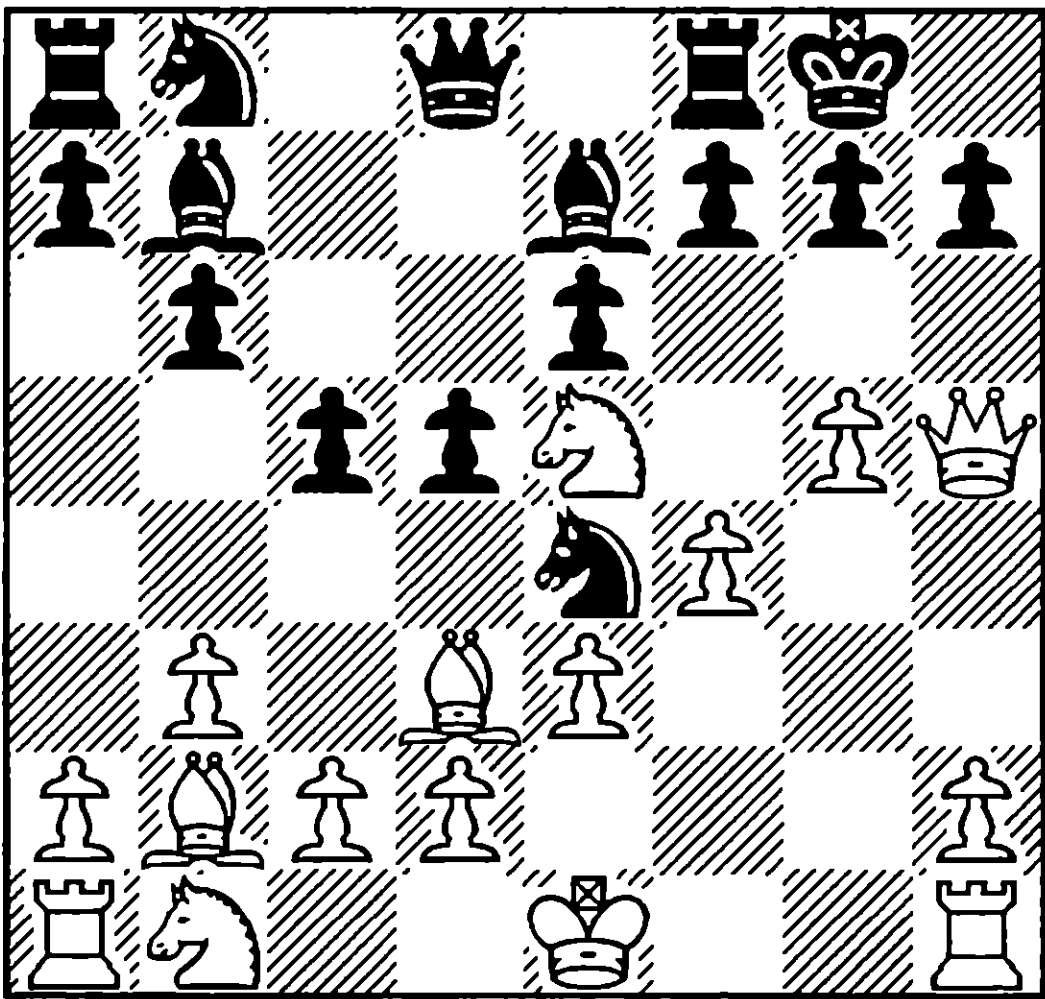
a1) 9...♘xe5 10 ♙xe5 ♘c6? 11

♙xh7! ♙xh7 12 ♗h5! ♙g8 13 ♙xg7! (readers should recognize this combination as the Lasker Attack, which crucially opens up the black king's defences) 13...♙xg7 14 ♗h6+ ♙g8 15 g6 ♙h4+ 16 ♙d1 fxg6 17 ♗xg6+ ♙h8 18 ♗h6+ ♙g8 19 ♗g1+ ♙f7 20 ♗g7+ ♙e8 21 ♗h5+ ♗f7 22 ♗xf7 mate, R.Renner! I.Blas, online game 2001.

a2) 9...f5 10 gxf6 ♘xf6 11 ♗f3 ♘bd7 (the natural 11...♙b7 is well met by 12 ♗h3!, hitting the e6-pawn and with latent mating threats against h7) 12 ♗g1 ♘xe5 13 ♙xe5 ♗f7 14 ♘c3 gave White very promising play in A.Schirbe-M.Reichelt, online game 2002.

b) 8...♘e4 9 g5 f6 10 ♙xe4 dxe4 11 gxf6 ♙xf6 12 ♗g4 ♙h4+ 13 ♙d1 ♗e7 14 ♗g1 ♙f6 15 ♘c3 was about equal in E.Lopatskaya-A.Dorofeeva, Moscow 1997. White has good chances to round up the weak e4-pawn, but this is offset by the king getting in the way of the rooks.

9 g5 ♘e4 10 ♗h5!?



I differed from the previous main game simply because I forgot what

happened. I suspect this is the experience of many players when it becomes a memory test, which is why knowing how the attack was constructed in a proper game can help you plan the middlegame, even if the exact moves are forgotten.

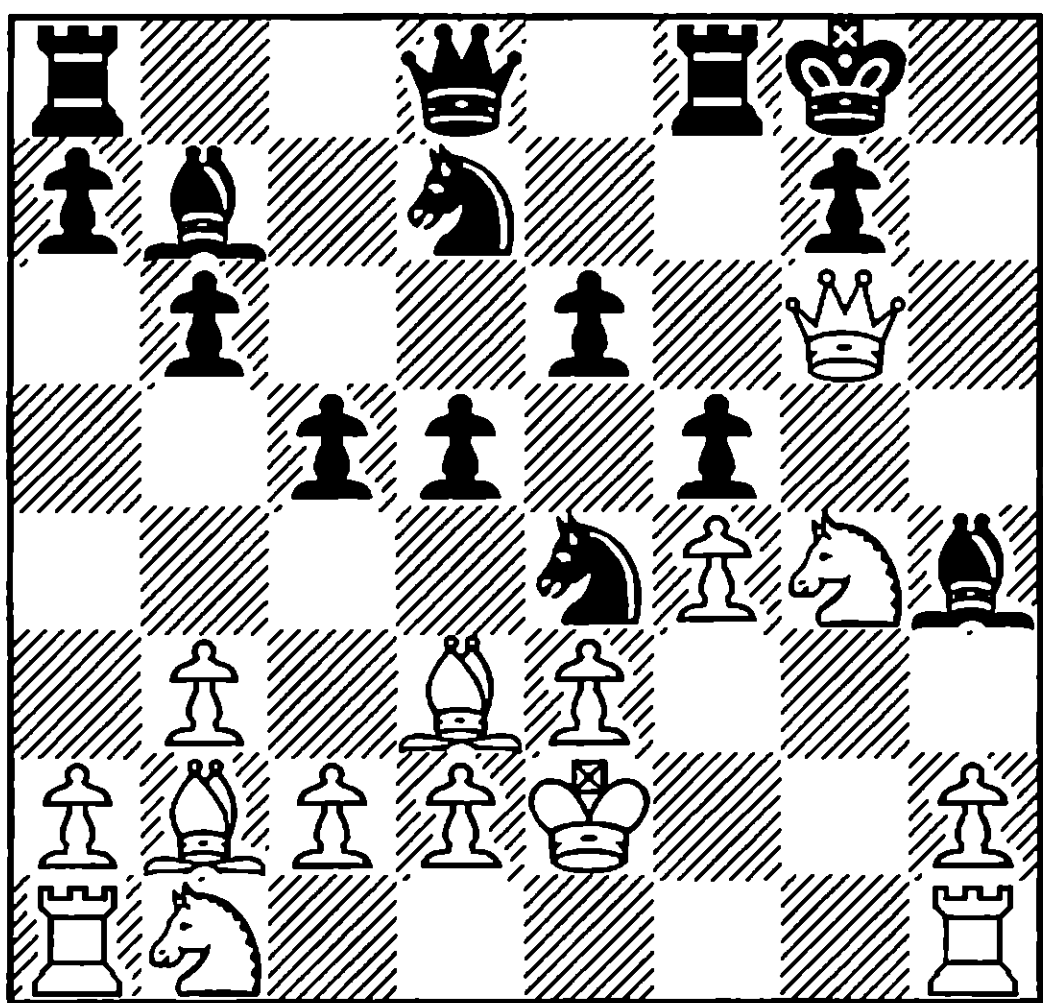
10...♘d7 11 ♘g4 f5?!

Black might make the most of my failure to exchange on e4 by coming up with the crafty 11...d4! to diminish the role of the bishop on b2. For instance: 12 ♖g1 (or 12 exd4?! cxd4 13 ♙xd4 ♘dc5 14 ♙xc5 bxc5 intending ...♚d4 with an edge) 12...g6 13 ♘h6+ ♙h8 14 ♚h3 and White's initiative is waning, or 13 ♚h4 f6 14 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 15 ♘h6+ ♙h8 16 ♘a3, preparing to castle queenside, but the attack is still floundering.

12 g6 hxg6

I was dreaming of 12...h6?, allowing me to be listed in puzzles books forever thanks to the wonderful 13 ♚xh6! gxh6 14 ♘xh6 mate.

13 ♚xg6 ♙h4+ 14 ♙e2



14...♚e7?

An instinctive way to defend against the threat of mate on g7 but it does not do a good job. Instead:

a) 14...♘df6 15 ♘h6+ ♙h8 16 ♙xe4! (the immediate 16 ♘f7+? is seen to be incorrect after 16...♖xf7 17 ♚xf7 ♘d6! and Black turns the tables due to the threats of ♘xf7 and ...c5-c4) 16...dxe4 17 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 18 ♚xf7 clearly favours White.

b) 14...♙f6! is the only way to cope with the tactics, when 15 ♘xf6+ ♘dxf6 16 ♖g1 ♚e7 would be roughly equal.

However, this is the beauty of attacking play: the defender has to jump over so many obstacles that he often trips up and misses the right continuation.

15 ♙xe4 ♙h8

A desperate decision, but it only now dawned on Black that 15...dxe4 is destroyed by 16 ♘h6+ ♙h8 17 ♚h5!, threatening to win the queen by 18 ♘xf5 discovered check, while 17...♚e8 gets mated after 18 ♘f7+ ♙g8 19 ♚h8+ ♙xf7 20 ♚xg7. Finally, 15...fxg4 is also hopeless due to 16 ♚h7+ ♙f7 17 ♙g6 mate.

16 ♚h5+ ♙g8 17 ♘h6+ 1-0

Black did not want to see 17...♙h8 (or 17...gxh6 18 ♚g6+ ♚g7 19 ♚xg7 mate) 18 ♘xf5+ ♙g8 19 ♘xe7+ ♙xe7 20 ♚h7+ ♙f7 21 ♙g6 mate.

Claim to Fame

This quick win with 1 b3 led me into the classic mistake of believing that this was an opening destined for suc-

cess. It gave me an unrealistic view of my chances and I started playing 1 b3 at every opportunity. However, after a while, my results were not quite as impressive: a series of draws and a loss to a local player made me realize that I could not extract enough pressure from the opening.

This is a problem a lot of people face: enjoying a good victory makes you want to repeat the experience and so you tend to remain oblivious to the shortcomings of the opening. This is particularly true of gambit openings, with which you might have a spectacular win, but then fail to make an impression when people prepare a line against it. Nowadays, it is even more difficult to win with a particular offbeat opening, since a lot of games end up on a computer database and keen opponents can look up your favoured line, so the important surprise factor is lost.

The one good thing about playing a different opening is that you soon find out which lines are awkward to meet, and you can then use them when playing the other side. For instance, my results as Black against 1 b3 zoomed up.

Nevertheless, I still took an interest in the Nimzo-Larsen Attack, especially in games played by Armenian grandmaster Artashes Minasian, a world-renowned expert on the opening, and was shocked when his 1 b3 was demolished in a heavyweight encounter. I think he must have shared the same opinion because he dropped it almost

completely from his opening repertoire, only resurrecting it against far less high-rated opponents. It was only some years later that Michael Adams, then settled in the top ten players of the world, published a best games collection and revealed that even elite players can be inspired to learn from history.

Game 40
Art.Minasian-M.Adams
European Team
Championship, Debrecen 1992
Nimzo-Larsen Attack

1 b3

In his collection of best games, *Chess in the Fast Lane*, Adams explains his opening choice: “I had managed to do some opening preparation and knew that it was not uncommon for my opponent to open in this manner. I had resolved to follow some half-remembered game Sadler-Lane, which I sat next to at Lloyds Bank Masters several years before.”

1...e5 2 ♖b2 ♘c6 3 e3 d6

This set-up to bolster the e5-pawn can be a bit frustrating for White, who usually likes to dominate the a1-h8 diagonal. The main line is considered to be 3...d5, when 4 ♖b5 increases the pressure on the e5-pawn.

4 ♖b5!?

Pinning the knight is the sharpest continuation and Minasian has been

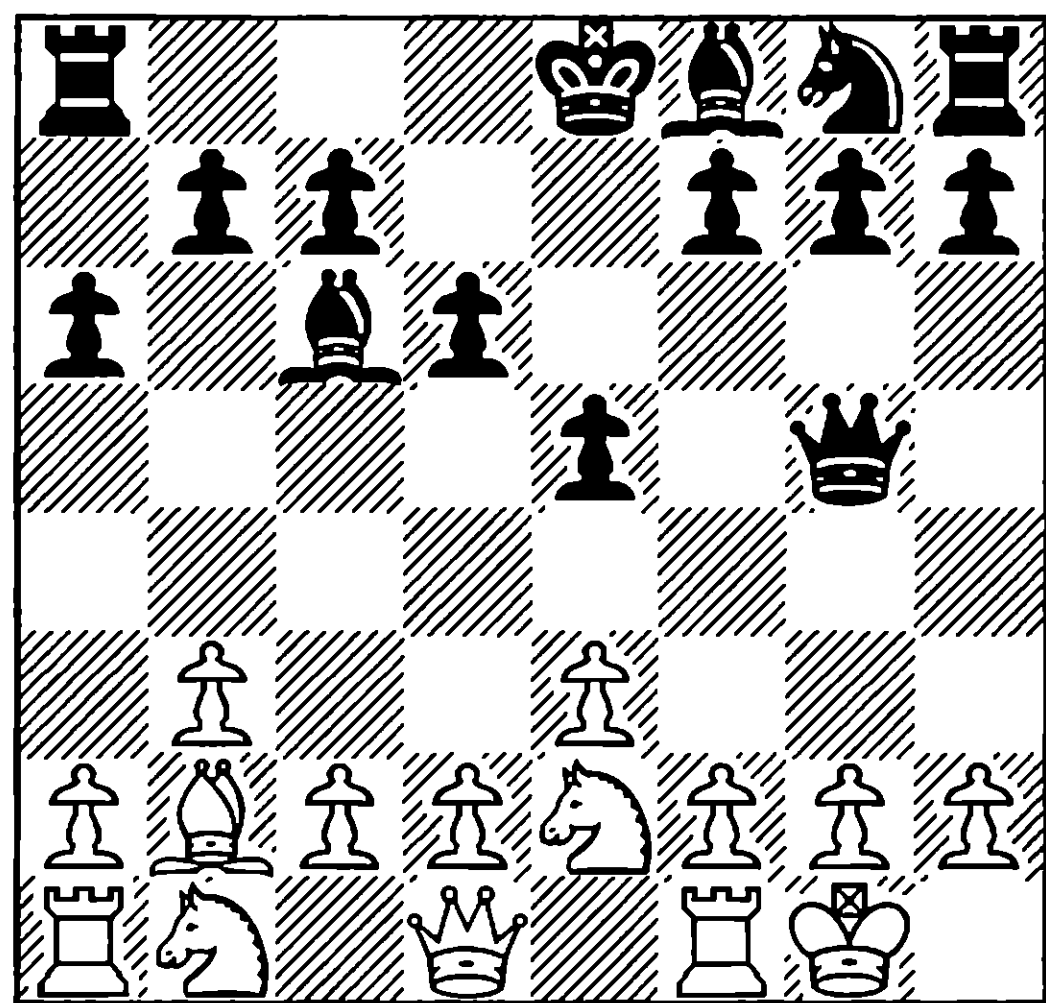
successful with it in the past. It is an intriguing move because it often involves giving away the bishop pair without damaging Black's pawn structure. In the Ruy Lopez Exchange 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♖c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙xc6 dxc6 (as in Games 31 & 32), for example, at least White has doubled the black c-pawns in return for giving up his bishop.

The positional approach with 4 c4 is the main alternative. For example: 4...♘f6 5 ♘f3 e4 6 ♘d4 ♘e5 (I think this well-placed knight is a sign that White's opening has been ineffective and that Black has already equalized) 7 ♙e2?! (a positional inaccuracy because the knight on d4 can now be ousted; 7 f4 maintains equality) 7...c5 8 ♘b5 a6 9 ♘5c3 ♙g4 (9...♙f5!, adding support to the e-pawn, is also worth considering and it stops White from advancing his d-pawn safely) 10 0-0 ♙xe2 11 ♙xe2 ♙e7 12 ♘a3 0-0 13 ♘c2 ♘d3 14 ♙a3 d5 gave Black an edge in T.Wall-G.Lane, British Team Championship 1999.

4...♙d7 5 ♘e2

White is planning to play f2-f4 to try and increase the power of his dark-squared bishop. Also possible is 5 ♘f3, intending to challenge in the centre with d2-d4. For instance: 5...e4 (here too 5...a6, encouraging White to exchange on c6, is a decent alternative) 6 ♙xc6 (6 ♘d4 is met by 6...♙g5, a thematic move in this variation) 6...bxc6 7 ♘g1 ♙g5 gave Black the initiative in T.Zaitseva-N.Gaprindashvili, Condino 2009.

5...a6 6 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 7 0-0 ♙g5!



I like this aggressive move which threatens mate in one and immediately poses White problems in the opening. It might seem rash to expose the black queen, but it is not easy for White to attack it, and practice has shown it to be a good choice. Instead 7...♘f6 is met by 8 f4 with a slight edge. **8 f3!?**

White wishes to blunt the influence of the bishop on c5, while the alternative 8 ♘g3 merely encourages 8...h5 with a strong initiative. It is worth quoting Adams to understand his thought process at this point:

"I remembered all this from the Lane game and also Gary's next move 8...h5, but at the board it seemed to me that 9 c4 h4 10 e4 h3 11 g3 would be rather messy. Although the advanced h-pawn is uncomfortable for White, his increased central control is important. My move is more flexible as it is always possible to advance the h-pawn later. According to my computer the game M.Sadler-G.Lane, London 1989, contin-

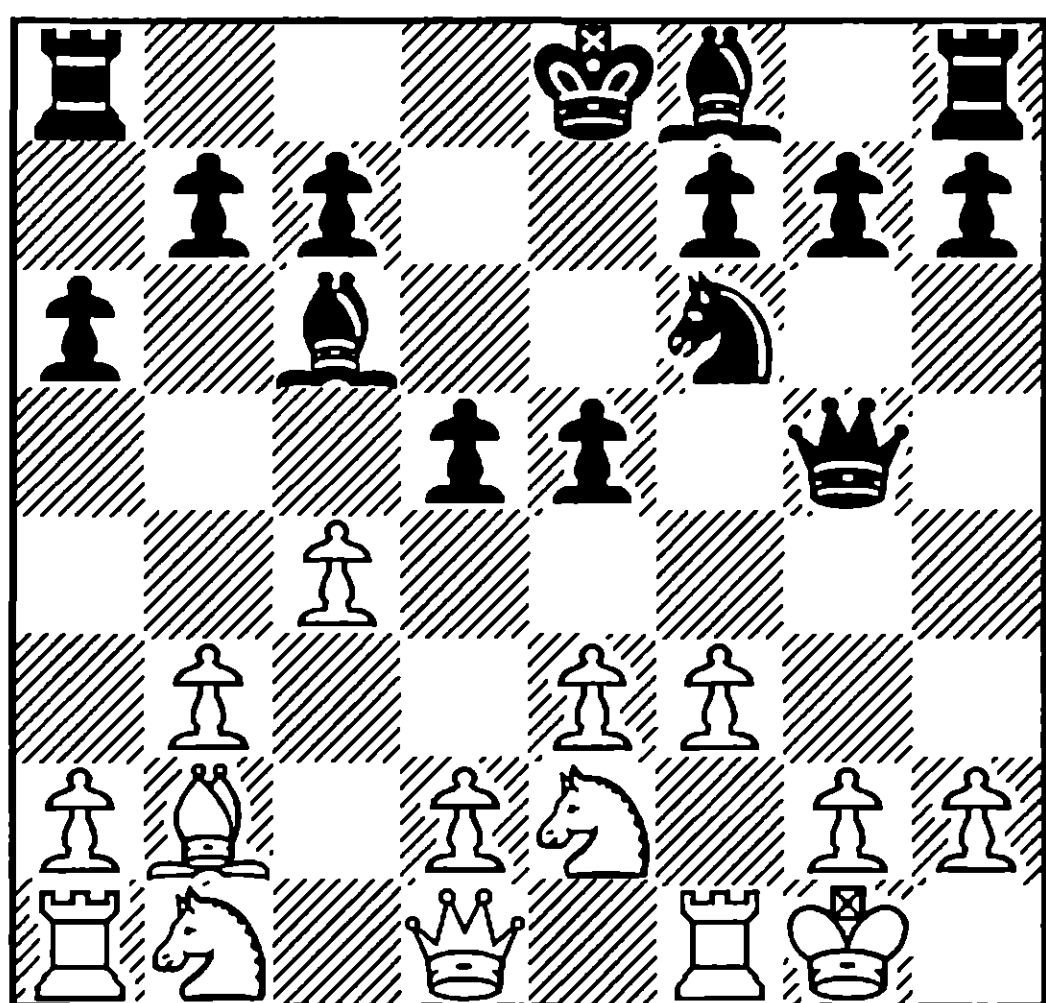
ued: 8...h5 9 ♖f2 ♘f6 10 c4 d5 11 cxd5 ♗xd5 12 ♗bc3 ♗b4 13 ♗c1 0-0-0 14 a3 ♗d5 and later Black crashed through on the kingside. You will see certain echoes in this game.”

Just for the record the game continued: 15 ♔c2 ♗f6 16 ♗1e2 ♖h6 (I could see that White was doing nothing to be feared, so I decided on a direct approach) 17 ♖c1 ♖g6 18 ♗g3 h4 19 ♗ge4 ♗xe4 20 ♗xe4 ♔h5 21 b4 f5 22 ♗c5 h3 23 g3 f4! (it is necessary to pursue the initiative by undermining White’s kingside pawn barrier) 24 ♕xe5 fxg3 25 ♕xg3 ♕d6 26 f4 ♔d5 27 e4 ♔d4 28 ♖e1 ♕xf4 (Black is now clearly winning, so White started to rush his moves because I was in time-trouble, but it soon backfires) 29 ♗b3 ♔d6 30 e5 ♔d5 31 ♖xf4 ♔g2 mate.

8...♗f6!? 9 c4

Minasian employs a familiar idea in the Nimzo-Larsen, trying to influence the centre and follow up with e3-e4 and ♗bc3-d5.

9...d5!



Black is in no mood to wait and see,

and so breaks immediately in the centre before White can construct his clamp. 9 e4 would have been met the same way.

10 ♗bc3?!

Perhaps 10 f4!? is the best choice, though Black is still on top after 10...exf4 11 ♗xf4 dxc4 12 bxc4 ♕d6 (threatening simply to take on f4 and mate on g2) 13 ♕xf6 ♔xf6 14 ♗c3 ♔g1 with a slight edge.

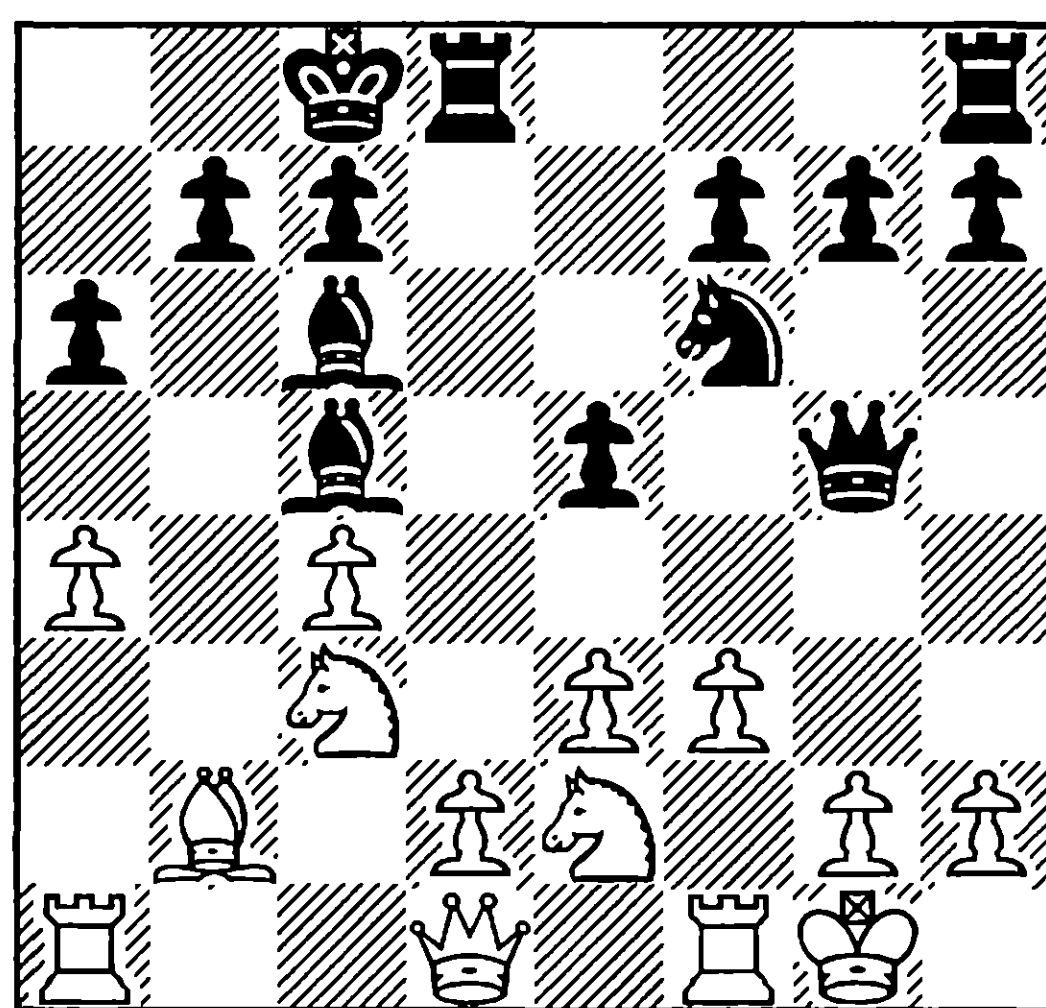
10...0-0-0

The black king gets out of the way and, more importantly, lines up the queen’s rook on the d-file, providing more tactical options.

11 a4?

White proceeds with his own plan of trying to provoke a compromise on the queenside. Instead 11 cxd5 ♗xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 13 ♗c3 ♖d7 is good for Black, who is threatening ...♕c5 with similar attacking themes to the game.

11...dxc4 12 bxc4 ♕c5!



It suddenly becomes clear that Adams has prepared a clever combination. The twin threats are ...♖xd2 (and

if the queen takes, then ♖xe3! wins) and the immediate ...♙xe3+, taking advantage of the pin on the d-file.

13 ♖h1 ♙xe3 14 ♙c1 ♙xd2 15 ♘b5!?

Two pawns down, the Armenian grandmaster seeks complications to try and unsettle Black. 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 ♙xd2 failed to 16...♞e3! with a big advantage.

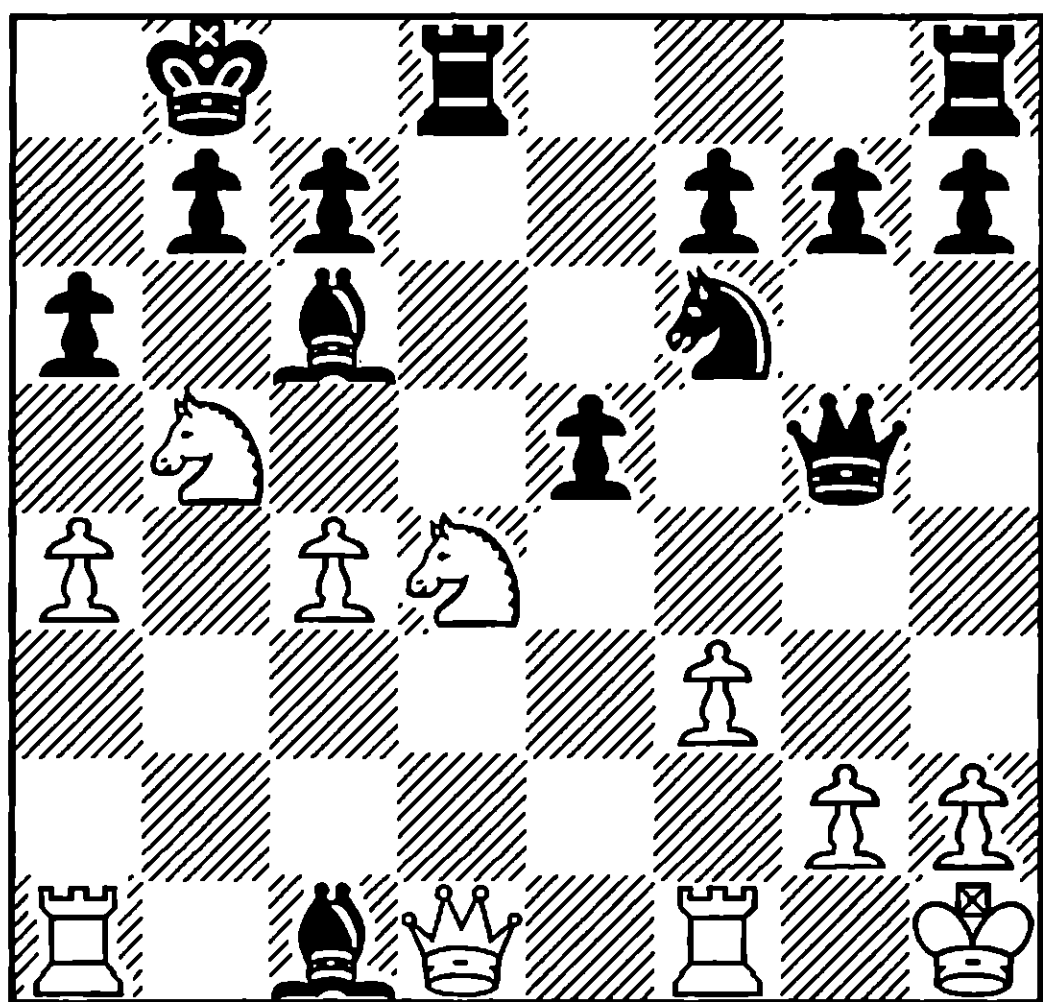
15...♙b8

A quiet move, but necessary because 15...♙xc1?! would allow White to wreck the black queenside by 16 ♞a7+ ♜b8 17 ♞xc6+ bxc6, when 18 ♜b3+ ♞a8 19 ♖axc1 gives him some compensation for the pawns. While 15...axb5?? is just a blunder, as after 16 axb5 both black bishops are en prise and White is threatening ♖a8+.

16 ♞ed4

16 ♞bd4 exd4 17 ♙xd2 ♜c5 is also good for Black.

16...♙xc1



Black takes the chance to gain material, having, as he revealed in his notes, calculated that White's attack is easily rebuffed. Otherwise 16...exd4 17

♙xd2 ♜c5 18 ♙14 ♞d7 was a simple way to *cash in your chips*, since White has nothing for the pawns.

17 ♞xc6+ bxc6 18 ♜b3

After 18 ♜xc1 ♜xc1 19 ♖axc1 cxb5 White should count the pieces and then resign.

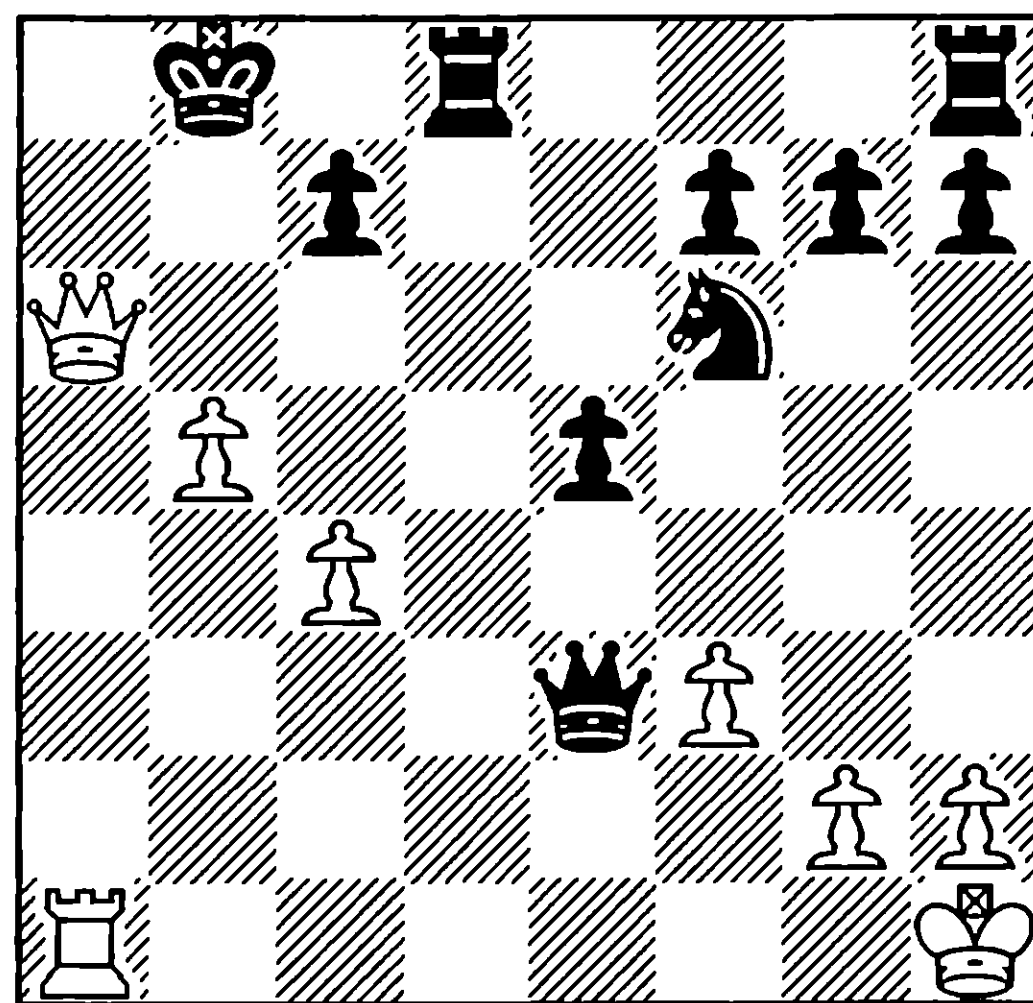
18...cxb5 19 axb5 ♜e3!

This had to be seen in advance. The threat to swap off queens enables the black queen to swing across to the queenside and thwart White's attack.

20 ♜a4 ♙b2 21 ♜xa6

White can keep fighting with 21 ♖a2!?, but then 21...♜b6 22 ♖xb2 ♞d7 leaves Black with a stout defence and of course an extra piece.

21...♙xa1 22 ♖xa1



22...♖d1+!

Black's plan is revealed: mate is prevented and he can now force the queens off.

23 ♖xd1 ♜a7 24 ♜c6 ♜b6 25 c5 ♜xc6 26 bxc6 ♖e8 27 g4 h6 28 h4 g5

Adams makes sure that the knight cannot be knocked off its perch on f6, which means White cannot invade the

seventh rank with his rook and the game is effectively over as a contest.

29 h×g5 h×g5 30 ♔g2 ♕c8 0-1

“I have noticed that when Magnus is not too happy with the opening that has appeared on the board, he will try to play quickly and confidently.” – former World Champion Vladimir Kramnik on his rival, the Norwegian star Magnus Carlsen.

The assumption that experienced players make it all up at the board continues to capture the popular imagination at club level, but even the very best players in the world are often happy to give a nod to their inspiration. In the following game White credits a couple of Boris Spassky games for his desire to attack in a certain way:

Game 41

M.Carlsen-R.Ponomarev

Moscow 2009

Sicilian Defence

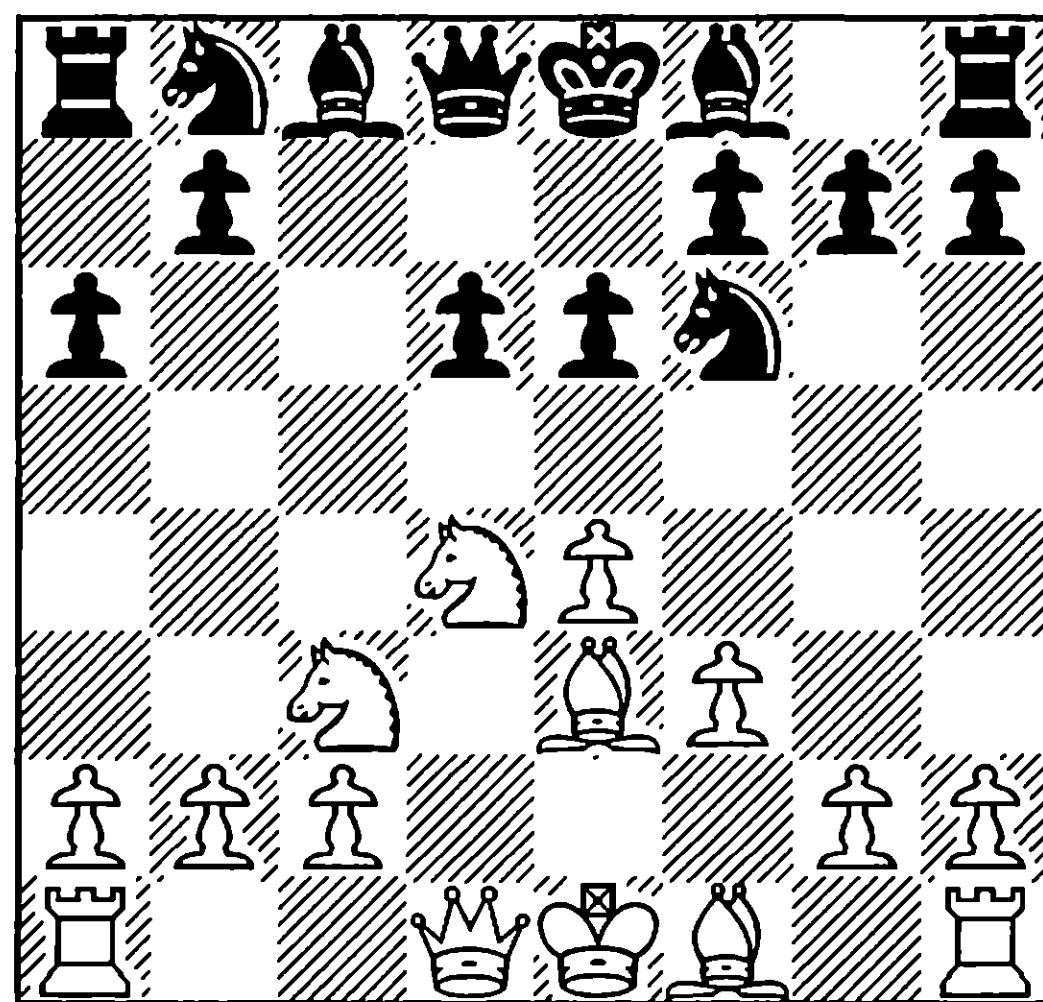
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 c×d4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6

The Najdorf Defence – although some of its exponents with the black pieces like to call it the Najdorf Attack.

6 ♙e3 e6 7 f3

An indication that Carlsen is preparing an aggressive formation. White is benefiting from the past by using a set-up known as the English Attack, named

for such players as Murray Chandler, John Nunn and Nigel Short, who used this system in the 1980s to devastating effect. The idea behind White’s little pawn move is threefold: to reinforce the e4-pawn; to prevent the annoying ...♘g4 after the white queen moves to d2; and finally to support the rapid advance of the g- and h-pawns, which can cause mayhem if Black responds slowly.



7...b5 8 ♙d2 ♘bd7 9 g4 h6 10 0-0-0 ♘e5 11 ♙e1

A slightly unusual move designed to maintain the tension. Carlsen revealed later that he played it in anticipation of the line 11...b4 12 ♘ce2, when 12...♘c4 no longer hits the queen so White can preserve his bishop with 13 ♙f2. The main alternative is 11 ♙d3.

11...♙c7 12 h4 b4 13 ♘ce2 ♘c4 14 ♘f4!?

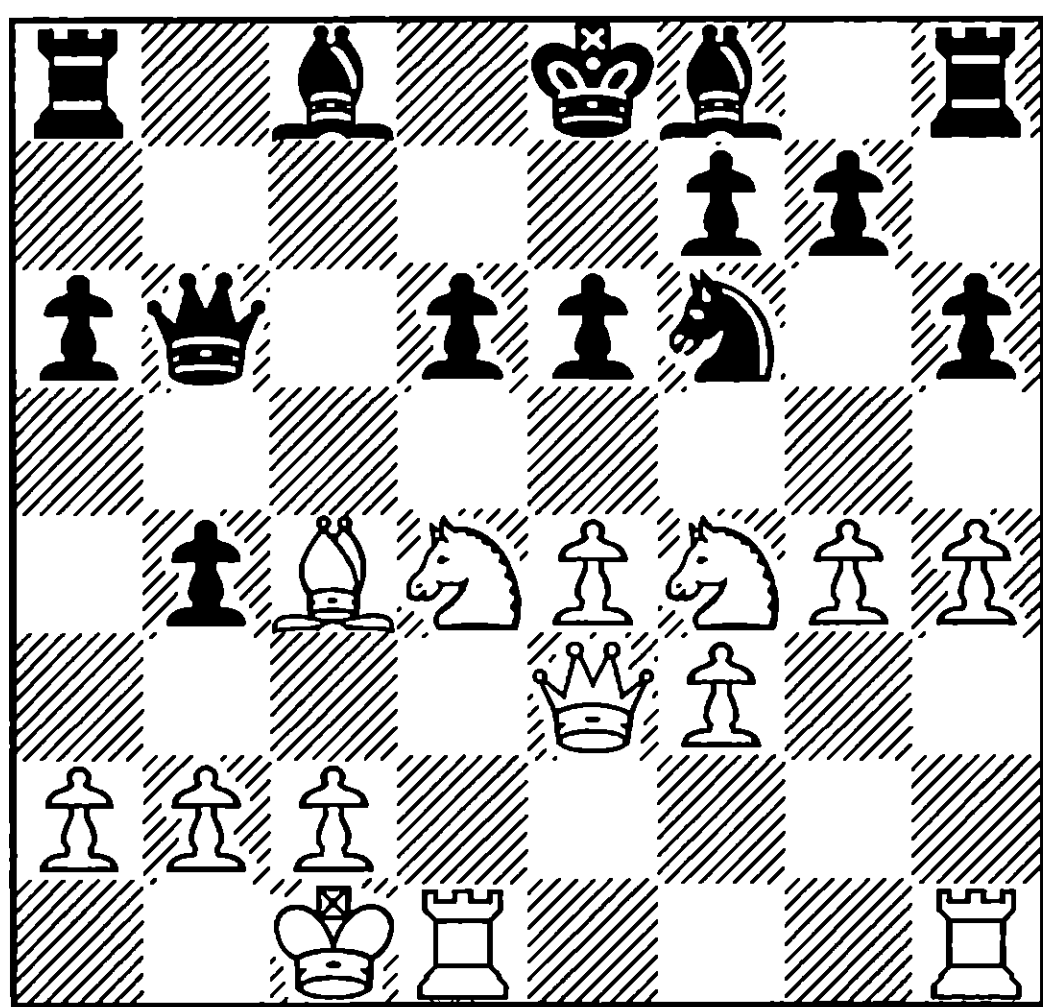
14 ♙f2 ♙e7 leads to equal chances. Instead, Carlsen is already thinking about possible sacrifices on e6 and invites Black to dare fork the knights with 14...e5, when 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 exd5

exd4 17 ♖xd4 ♗d7 18 ♗xb4 would give him a dangerous attack.

14...♗xe3 15 ♖xe3 ♗b6?!

This time 15...e5 fails at the first hurdle, as after 16 ♘d5! ♗xd5 17 exd5 the e5-pawn is suddenly pinned, leaving White with the better position. So perhaps 15...♗e7 should be considered, which rules out the potential pin on the e-file and ...e6-e5 becomes a serious threat.

16 ♗c4!

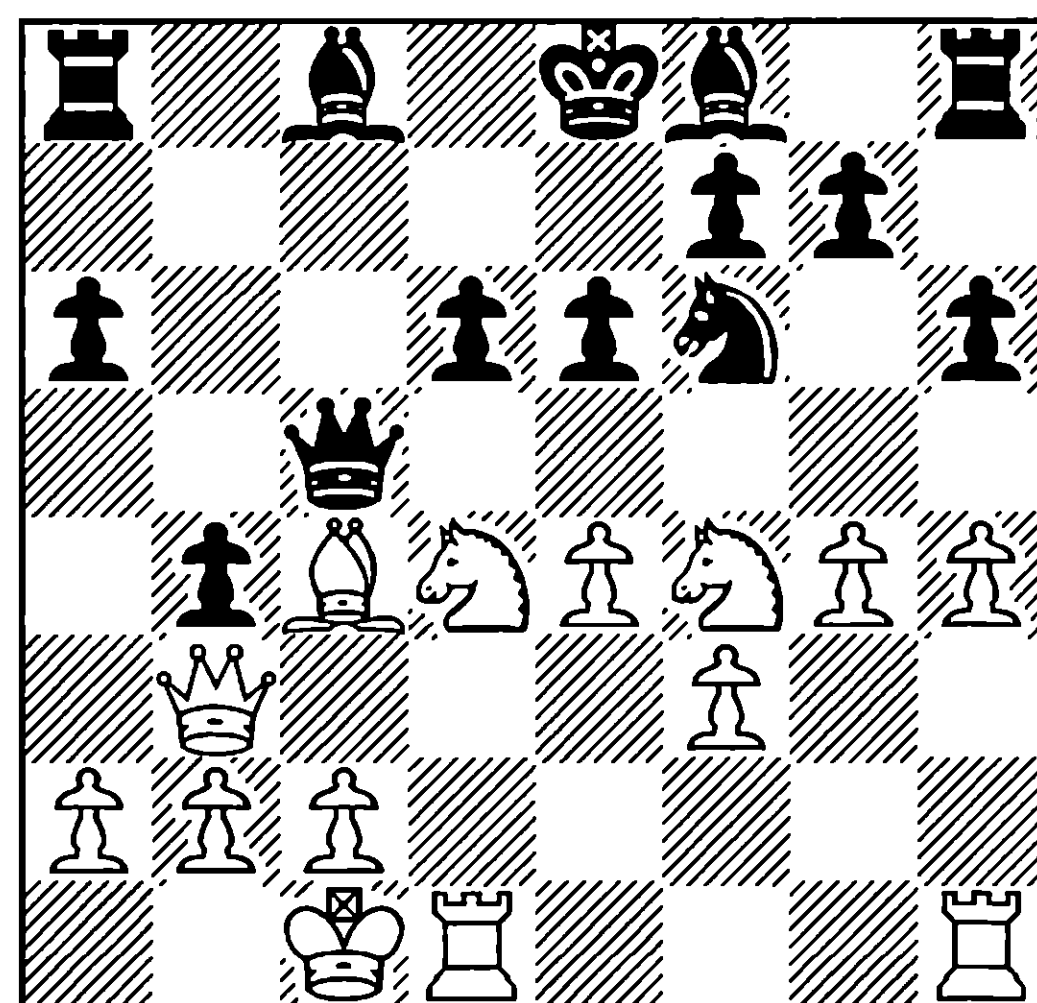


The bishop is developed to get ready for a sacrifice on e6. Now I would say that such a move is logical because it adds another piece to the attack and gives White more options. However, Carlsen revealed that he was inspired to make the move after remembering his chess history. He wrote: “At this point, I was already dreaming of carrying out an attack in the style of the games Spassky-Polugaevsky, USSR Championship 1958, and Spassky-Tukmakov, USSR Championship 1973, games I had read about in the *My Great Predecessors* book on Spassky. In those

games, after the sacrifice of the knight on e6, the attack guided by a very strong light-squared bishop was decisive in the long run.”

If such a brilliant player as Carlsen can be positively influenced by the prospect of history repeating, it gives the rest of us hope in improving our games.

16...♖c5 17 ♖b3















17...d5?!

Perhaps Black is better off playing 17...♖e5, although 18 ♘dxe6 ♗xe6 19 ♘xe6 fxe6 20 ♗xe6 puts him under a lot of pressure, since the bishop on e6 stops him from castling to safety on either side.

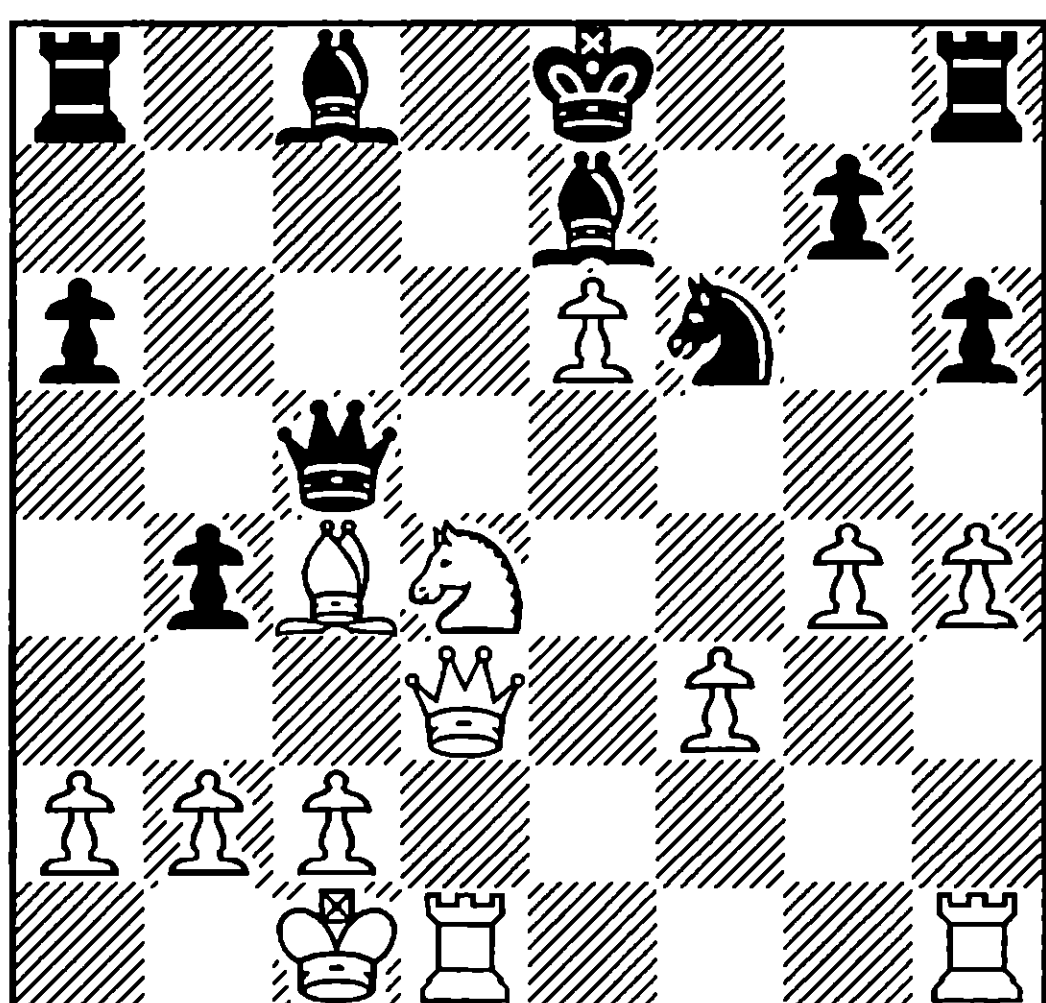
18 exd5 ♗d6 19 ♘fxe6

Carlsen sees a winning move and saves time on the clock by going for it – a practical decision with elements of *cash in your chips*, where a good line is chosen rather than spending ages looking for a perfect one. Carlsen reflected on this strategy in his notes to the game. He wrote: “One of many good moves. After I saw this one (♘fxe6), I

didn't really bother to calculate other moves, as I thought that White is easily winning. 19 dxe6! would have been even better. I discarded it because of 19...xe6 when the knight is hanging. I would probably have chosen it if I had bothered to calculate two moves further: 20 d3 e3+ 21 b1 and White is completely winning."

I would add that 19...fxe6 is no better in view of 20 g6 g8 21 dxe6 b7 22 xd6! xd6 23 d1 c5 24 e7 and wins.

19...fxe6 20 dxe6 ♖e7 21 ♔d3



A strong continuation, threatening ♔g6+. The immediate 21 g5 is also good; for example, 21...♘h5 (or 21...hxg5 22 ♔d3! 0-0 23 hxg5 ♔xg5+ 24 ♔b1 followed by ♖dg1) 22 ♙d5 ♖a7 23 ♙c6+ ♔f8 24 ♔d3 ♙d6 25 ♔g6, threatening both ♔xh5 and ♔e8 mate.

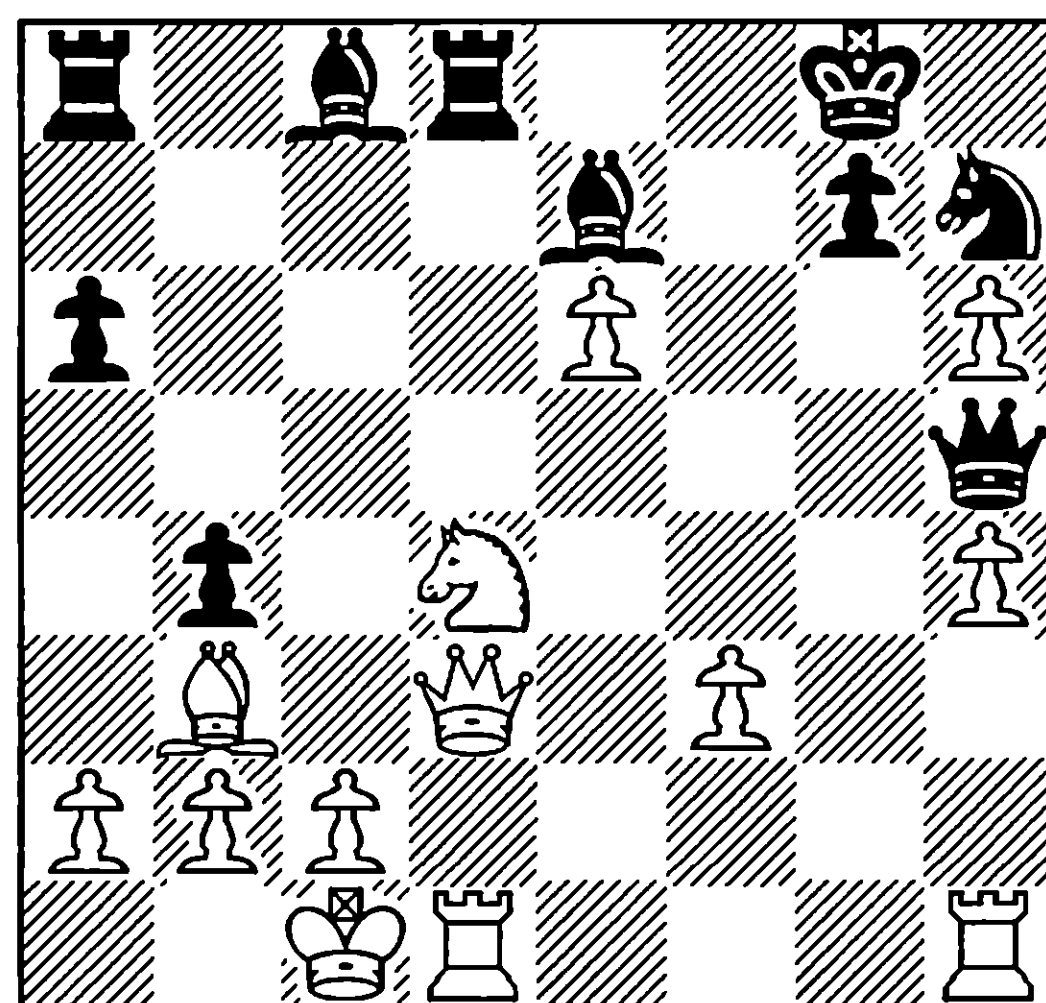
21...0-0 22  b3  d8!?

White was threatening ♔g6 again and then ♞f5. Ponomarev understandably tries to stop that by attacking the knight, but White has too many tactical possibilities.

23 g5 4h7

After 23...hxg5 24 hxg5 ♔xg5 25 ♖b1 and 26 ♙d3 Black has no hope of survival.

24 gxf6 ♔h5



25 ♔e4!

The queen steps out of the pin on the d-file and sets up numerous tactical options by targeting the a8-rook and steadying himself to play ♖f5 or ♘c6.

25... ♔xh6+ 26 ♔b1 ♖a7 27 ♞f5 ♖xd1+

The attempt to defend by 27...♔f6 fails miserably to 28 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 29 e7+ ♔h8 30 ♕d5! and Black should give up.

28 ♖xd1 ♔f6 29 ♖d7!

A clever way to press home the advantage, though White is spoilt for choice as 29 ♖g1, threatening to take on g7, is also very strong.

29...♙xd7 30 exd7+ ♔f8 31 ♚d5 1-0

Black resigned since ♔g8 mate cannot be prevented.

Carlsen acknowledged that Spassky's games against Polugaevsky and

Iukmakov were an influence, so let's take a closer look at them:

Game 42
B.Spassky-L.Polugaevsky
 USSR Championship,
 Riga 1958
Sicilian Defence

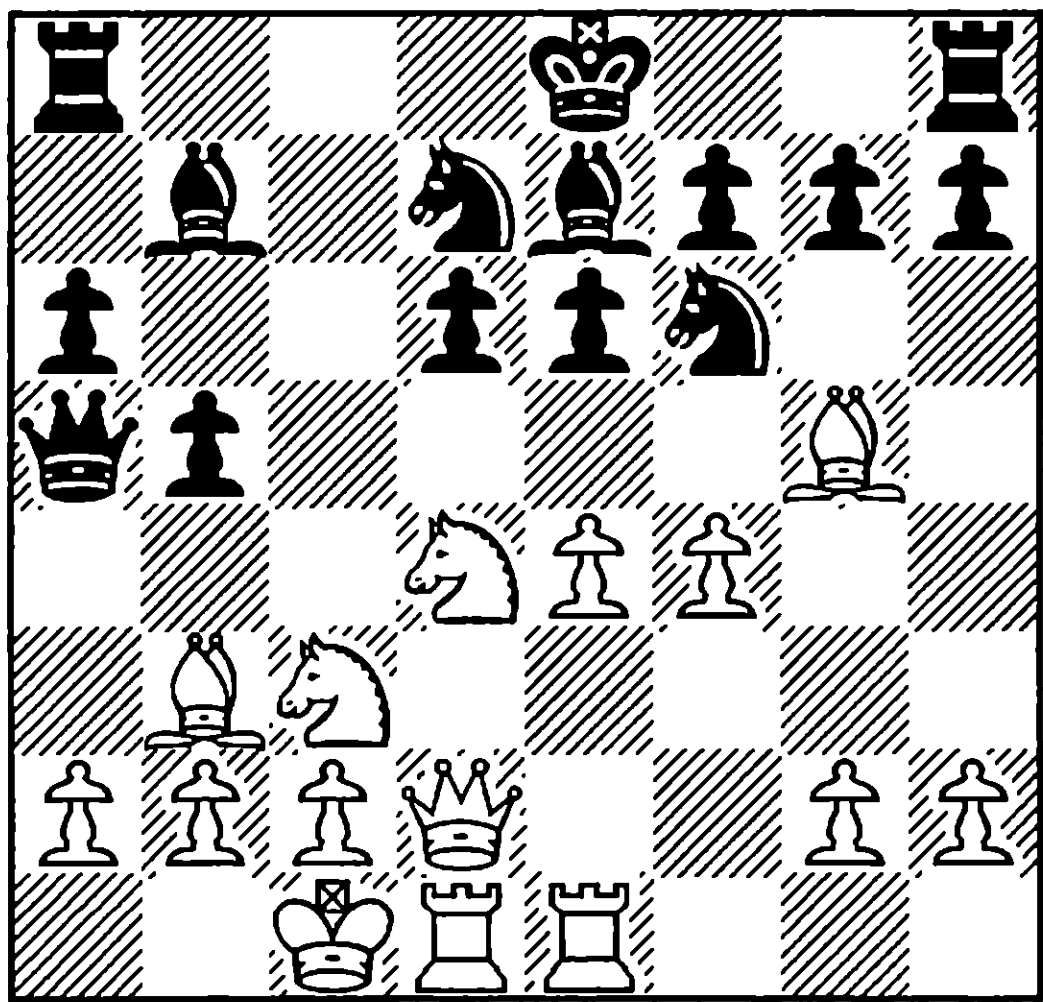
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♙g5 ♘bd7!?

This used to be the height of fashion but has since been neglected to a certain extent. It was later determined that with a knight on d7 White can often carry out aggressive operations via the d5 and e6-squares.

7 ♙c4

The bishop lines up on the a2-g8 diagonal which is a feature in many Sicilian lines and, of course, featured in the Carlsen game.

7...♚a5 8 ♚d2 e6 9 0-0-0 b5 10 ♙b3 ♙b7 11 ♖he1 ♙e7 12 f4



The bishop on b3 and knight on d4 are poised to wreak havoc by taking on

e6. This is clearly a good memory for Carlsen who used the same idea.

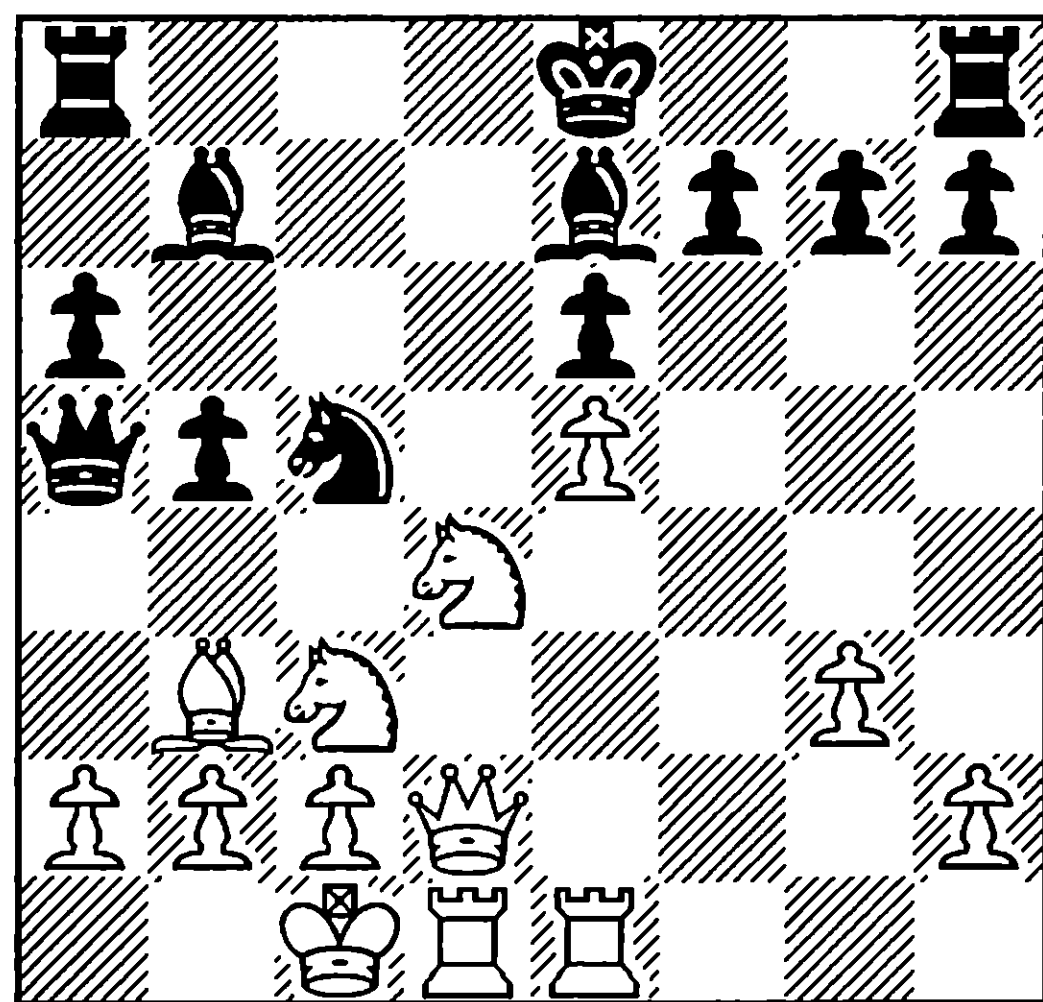
12...♘c5

After 12...b4? White has a typical attacking trick for this variation in planting a knight on a surprising square: 13 ♘d5!, when 13...exd5 14 exd5 demonstrates the peril of leaving your king on its original square. Breaking the pin with 14...♙f8? is no help, as after 15 ♖xe7! ♙xe7 16 ♘c6+ ♙xc6 17 dxc6, the threats of cxd7 and ♚xd6+ are enough to secure victory.

13 e5!? dxe5 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6?!

A slight inaccuracy, as now White has it all his own way. Instead, 14...gxf6 is the way to go, intending 15 fxe5 0-0-0! 16 exf6 ♙xf6 17 ♚f2 ♙g7 with roughly equal chances.

15 fxe5 ♙h4 16 g3 ♙e7



17 ♙xe6!

In their notes to the game, Spassky and the writer Dmitry Rovner commented: "One of those little combinations, which are often a necessary addition to the completion of an attack. The move in the game emphasizes the

drawbacks of the move 6...♗bd7 (it does not fight for the d4-square)."

17...0-0?!

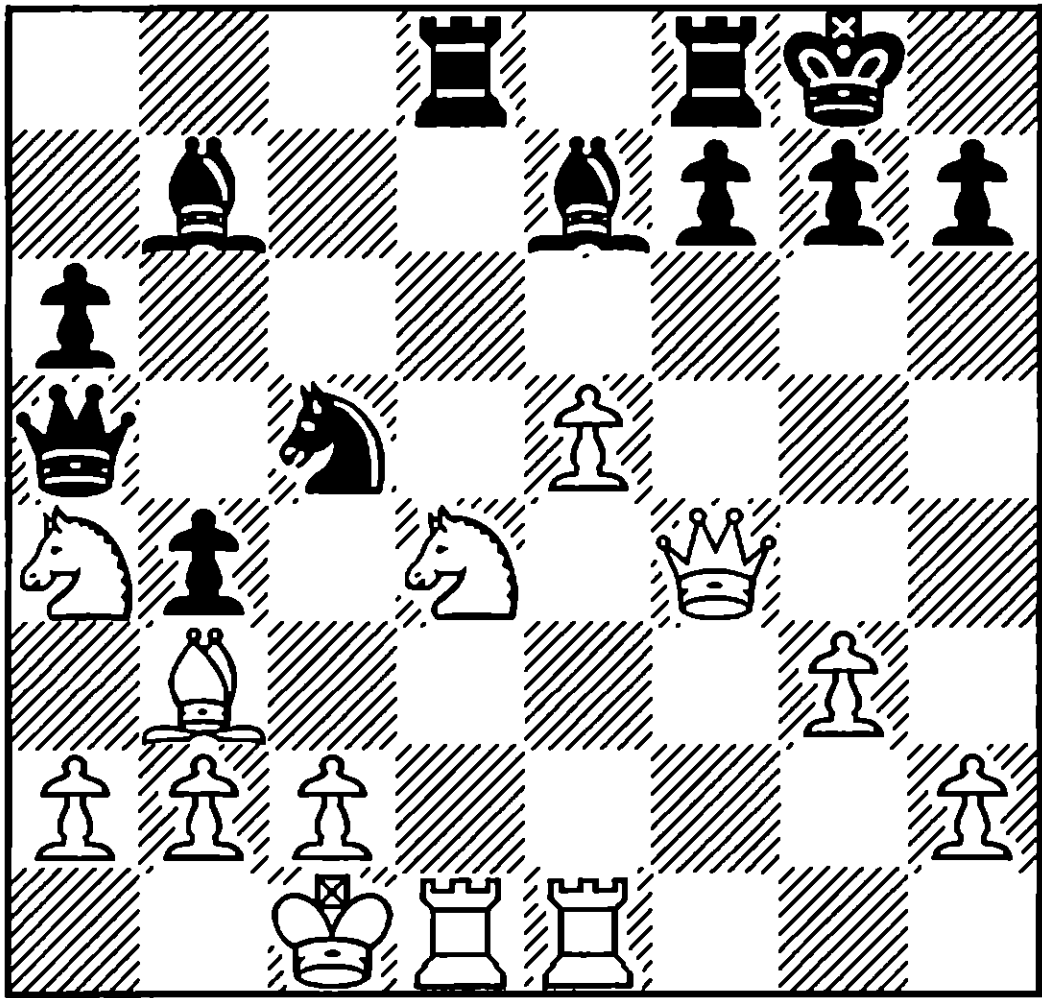
Black tries to castle out of trouble. Instead:

a) 17...fxe6 (or 17...♖xe6 18 ♖xe6 fxe6 19 ♔d7+) 18 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 19 ♔d7+ ♙f7 20 ♖f1+ ♙g6 21 ♔xe6+ ♙h5 22 g4+ leads to mate.

b) 17...b4 18 ♙xf7+! ♙xf7 19 ♔f4+ ♙e8 20 ♖f5 ♖e6 21 ♖d6+ ♙xd6 22 exd6 ♙d7 23 ♔f7+ also wins easily.

c) 17...♔d8! (the best of the bunch, all thanks to the computer) 18 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 19 ♔f4+ ♙g8 20 ♖f5 ♔f8 21 e6 h6 22 h4 gives White excellent compensation.

18 ♙b3 ♖ad8 19 ♔f4 b4 20 ♖a4!

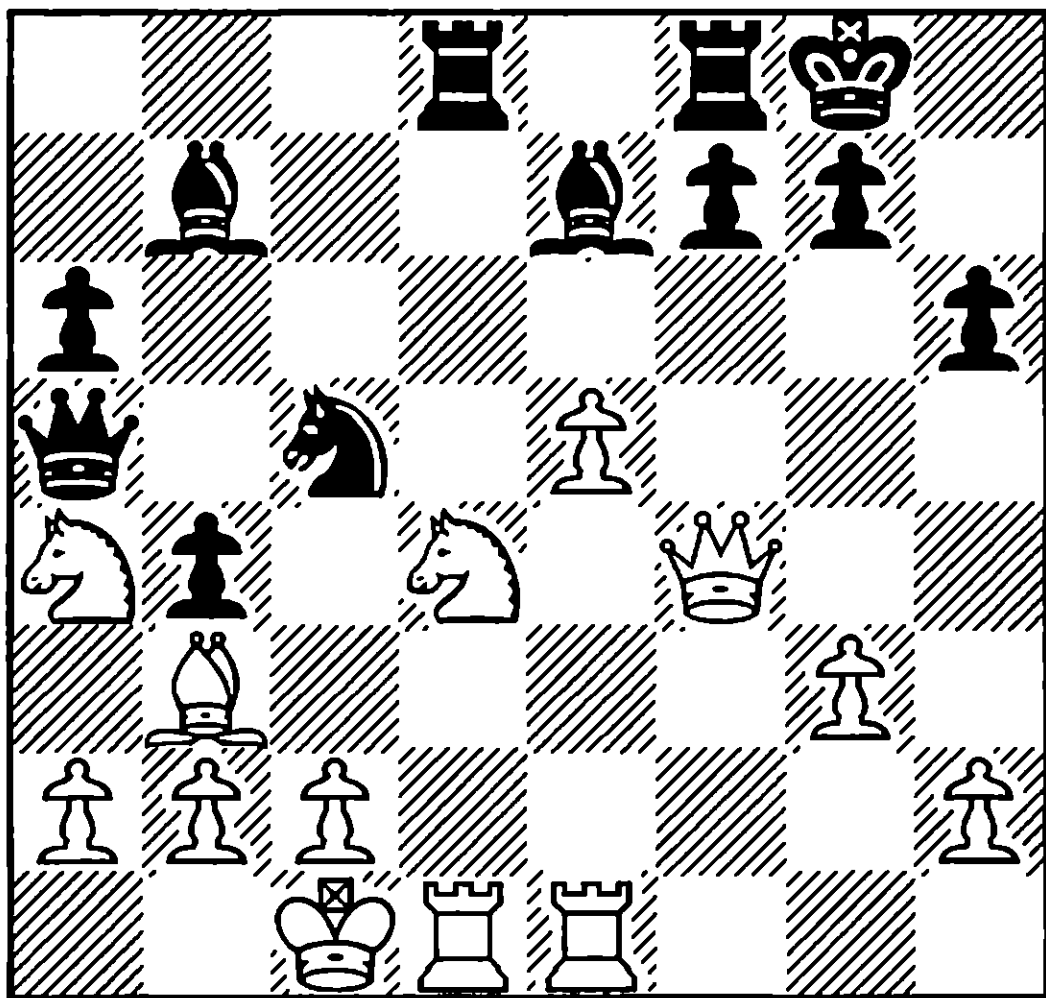


A deep sacrificial idea. In *My Great Predecessors* Kasparov suggested 20 ♖f5(?) ♖xb3 21 axb3 bxc3 22 ♖xe7+ ♙h8 23 ♙b1 when White is a safe pawn ahead, but after 20...bxc3! 21 ♖xe7+ ♙h8 Black has good play: he still threatens 22...♖xb3 and 23...♔xa2, while 22 ♙b1 (22 ♙xf7? cxb2+ 23 ♙xb2 ♙e4!) is now met by 22...♖e4! 23 ♖f5

(or 23 a3 ♖d2) 24 ♖g1? 24 ♔e3 ♔xe3, and Black is certainly not worse.

20...h6

Polugaevsky spots the problem that in some lines ♔g5 can be deadly; for instance, 20...♖xa4 21 ♖f5 ♖xd1+ 22 ♖xd1 ♙c5 23 ♔g5 g6 24 ♖h6+ ♙g7 25 ♖g4 and wins (Spassky and Rovner). The text is an answer to that, while also threatening 21...♙g5, pinning the queen to the king. Nevertheless, 20...♖xa4! is the critical line and after 21 ♖f5 ♖xd1+ 22 ♖xd1, not 22...♙c5?, but 22...♙d8! when 23 ♙xa4? runs into the surprising 23...h6! and “it is now White who has to think of how to save the game” (Kasparov). In response Spassky would have to find 23 e6!, when a sample line runs 23...♖c5 (not 23...fxe6? 24 ♖h6+! gxh6 25 ♙xe6+ ♙g7 26 ♖d7+ with forced mate) 24 e7 ♖xb3+ 25 axb3 ♙xe7 26 ♖xe7+ ♙h8 27 ♔d6! ♖e8 28 ♔d7 ♖b8 29 ♖b1 and White is better according to Kasparov.

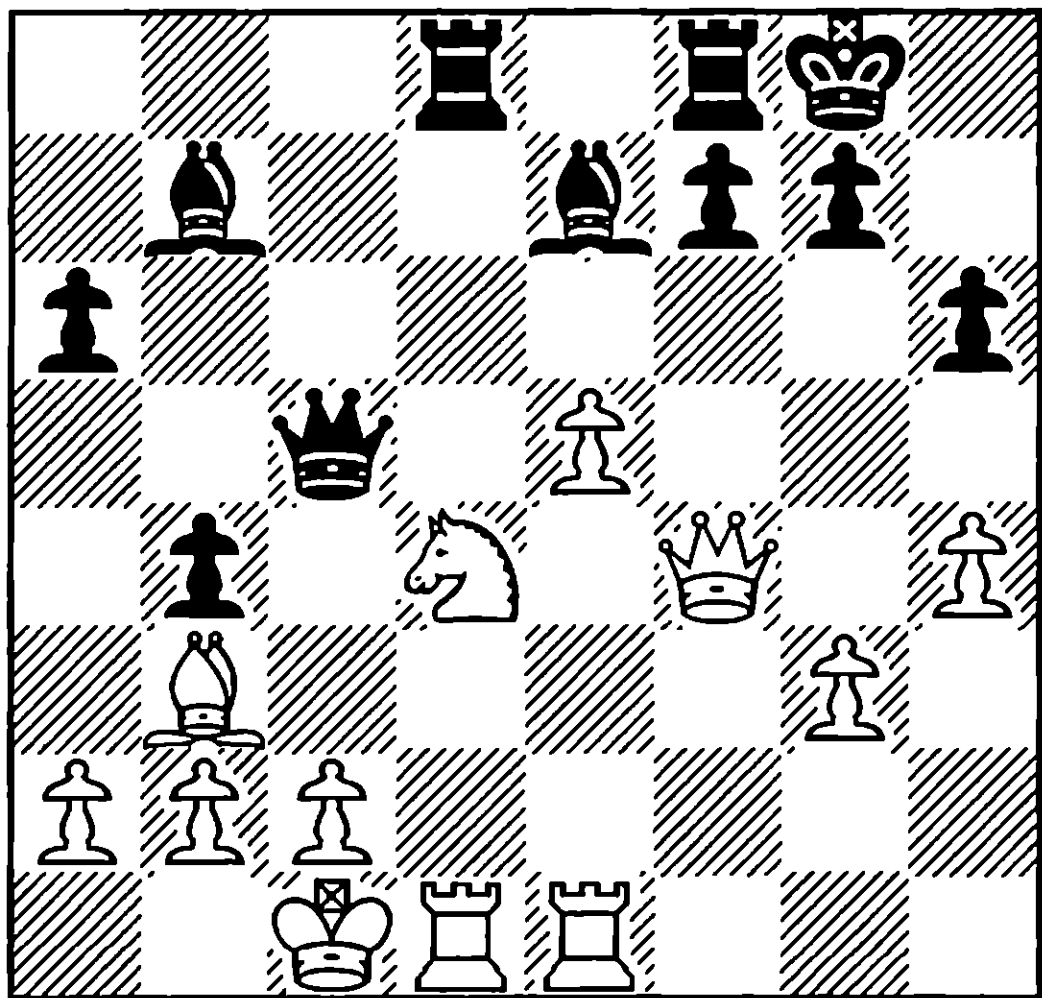


21 ♖xc5! ♔xc5

The ploy of pinning the queen fails to live up to the hype, as after 21...♙g5?

22 ♖xg5 hxg5 23 ♜xb7 ♜c7 24 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 25 e6 Black has conceded too much material and is in big trouble.

22 h4



White takes the time to prevent ...♗g5, because the fierce middlegame flurry of tactics has now finished, and he has emerged with an extra pawn and still has the initiative.

22...♗d5 23 ♜f5 ♗xb3 24 axb3 ♜xd1+ 25 ♜xd1 ♜c8 26 ♜e4 ♗f8 27 e6 fxe6 28 ♜xe6+ ♜h8 29 ♜e4 ♜c6 30 ♜d3

White could have exchanged queens to enter a superior ending (due to the extra pawn) but wants to test Black's defensive prowess just a little longer.

30...♜e8 31 h5 ♗e7 32 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 33 ♜g6! ♜e8 34 g4 ♜e1 35 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 36 ♜d4 a5 37 ♜d2 ♜e5 38 c4 bxc3+ 39 bxc3 ♜g5 40 c4 ♜g8 41 ♜f4! g6 1-0

And after studying the position in the adjournment, Black resigned without resuming.

The idea of sacrificing on e6 looked impressive in that game, and White

repeats the trick again in another impressive performance:

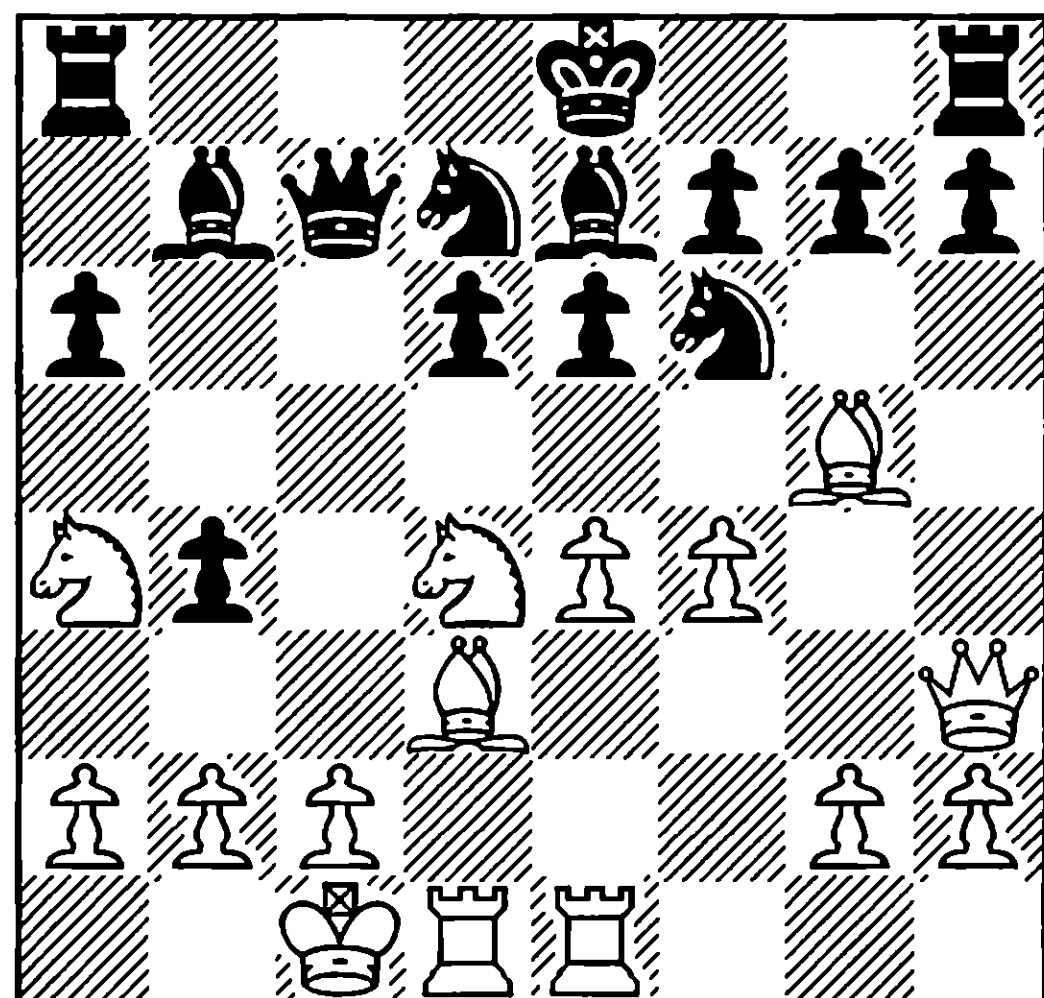
Game 43

B.Spasky-V.Tukmakov
USSR Championship,
Moscow 1973
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 ♘bd7 8 ♜f3 ♜c7 9 0-0-0 b5 10 ♗d3 ♗b7 11 ♜he1 ♜b6!?

Apparently an idea of Polugaevsky's, making White decide what to do with the knight on d4. Instead 11...♗e7 12 ♜g3! was good for White in the 15th game of B.Spasky-R.Fischer, Reykjavik 1972, from their famous World Championship match.

12 ♘b3 b4 13 ♘a4 ♜c7 14 ♘d4 ♗e7 15 ♜h3

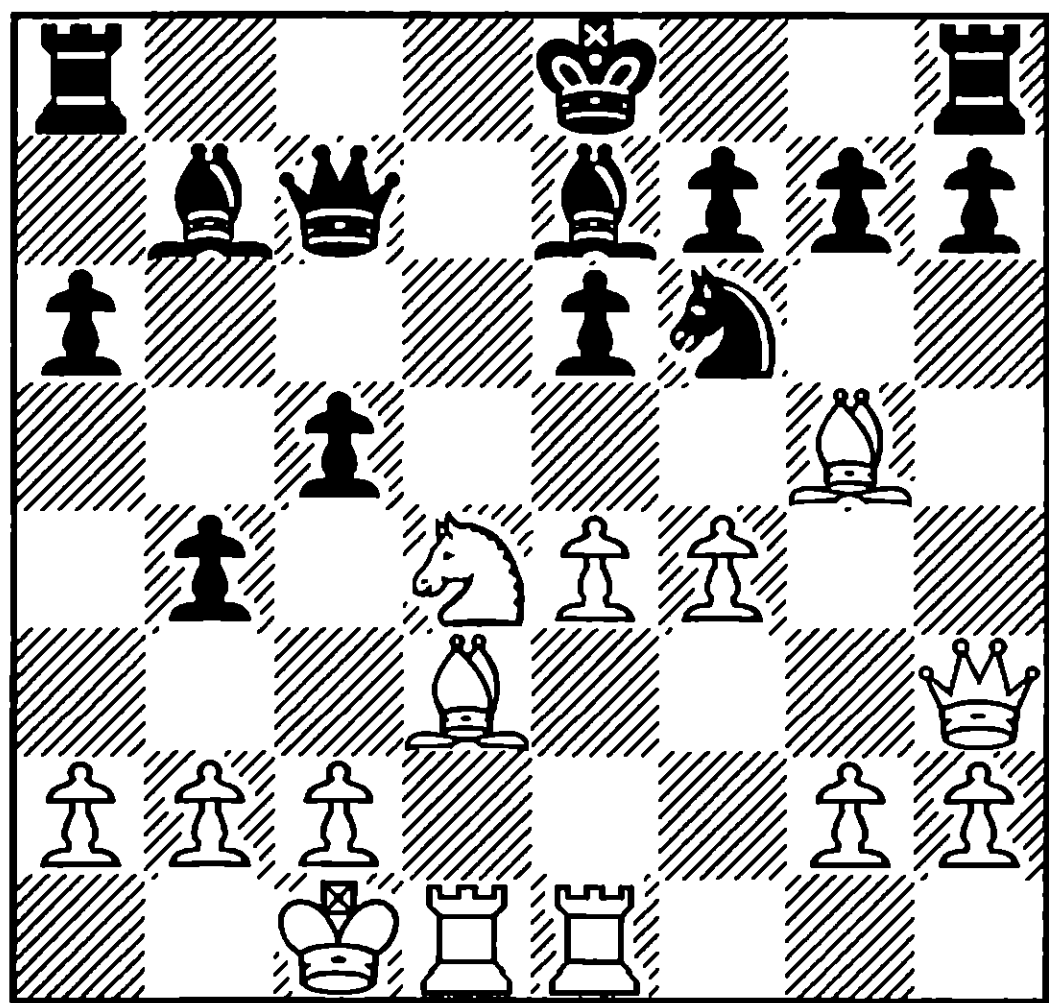


Following the pattern of the previous game; Spasky's rooks are in the centre and a knight sacrifice on e6 is looming.

15...♗c5

A lot of people have fallen for the trap of 15...0-0? which is a classic case of “castling into it”: 16 e5! (the discovered attack against h7 by the bishop on d3 spells doom and gloom for Black) 16...dxe5 17 ♖xf6! ♞xf6 18 fxe5 and White will win material.

16 ♞xc5 dxc5



17 ♞xe6!

The knight sacrifice has echoes of Carlsen’s game; he replicated the idea to keep the black king stuck in the centre and then took steps to increase the pressure. It is worth quoting Kasparov’s opinion of the position: “It is probable that Tukmakov glanced at this variation at home and underestimated the knight sacrifice. In fact, it does not lead to a direct deterioration in Black’s position and is of a purely positional character. White gains a couple of pawns and a long-term initiative for the piece. Spassky very much liked such sacrifices.”

17...fxe6 18 ♖c4 ♜d8

This game might well have been an

indicator of how to conduct an attack for Carlsen, but for the winner of the game E.Tairova L.Schiendorfer, Biel 2008, it is another case of *history always repeats*. White scored an easy win based on knowing how to attack in this variation: 18...♖c8 19 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 20 ♜xe6 ♜c8 21 ♜c4 h6?! (21...♞f8 is necessary to bolster the defence, although 22 f5 ♞f7 23 g4! keeps up the pressure) 22 e5! ♞g8 (not 22...hxg5? 23 exf6 gxf6 24 fxg5 fxg5 25 ♜e4 ♞a7 26 ♜g6+ and Black will soon be mated) 23 ♖xe7 ♞xe7 24 ♜d6 h5 25 ♖b1!? (I would prefer 25 ♜ed1 at once) 25...♞h6 26 ♜ed1 ♞b8 27 f5! ♜xd6 28 exd6 ♜xf5 29 ♜f1 ♜g6 30 dxe7 ♖xe7 31 ♜xc5+ 1-0.

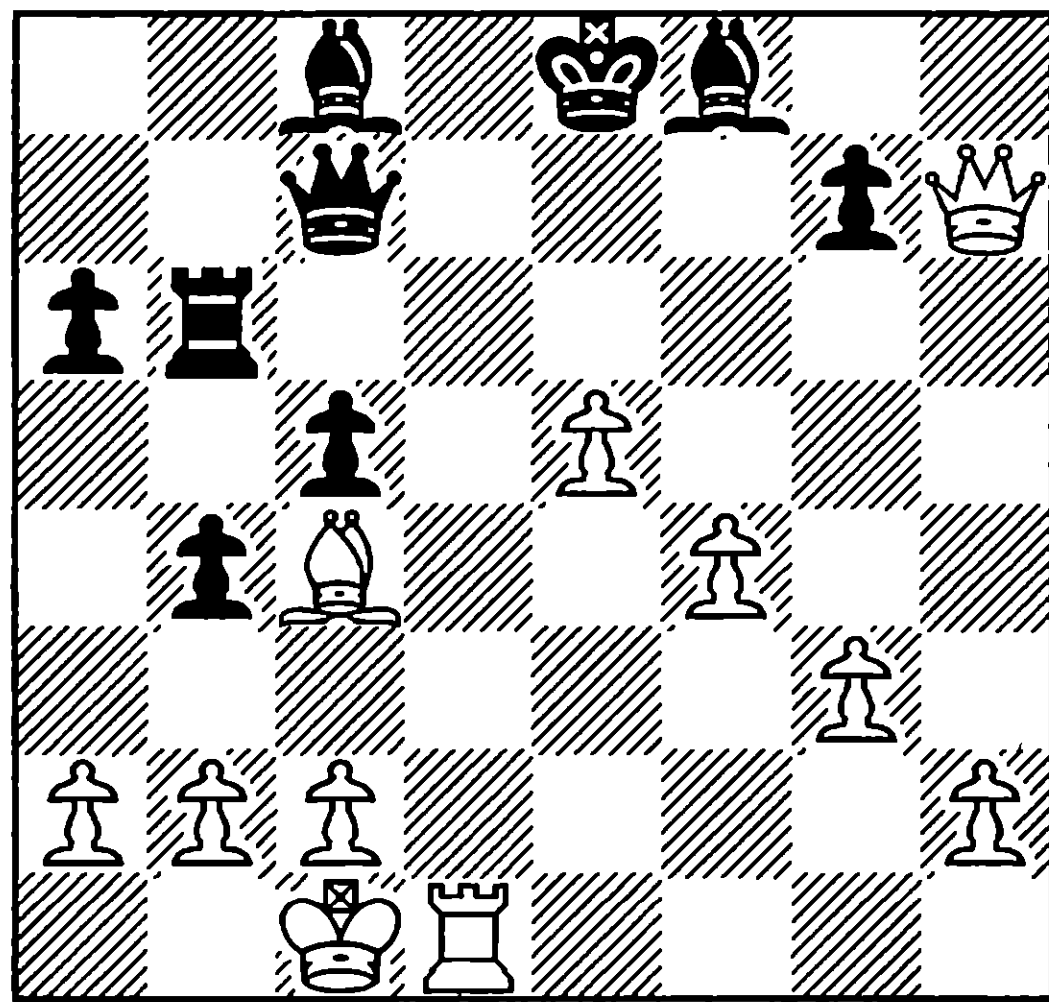
19 ♜xe6 ♜xd1+ 20 ♜xd1 ♜f8 21 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 22 ♜g8+ ♖f8

22...♞f8?? allows 23 ♖f7 mate.

23 g3 ♖c8

23...♖xe4? 24 ♜e1 ♜e7 25 ♖d5 ♖xd5 26 ♜xe7+ ♖xe7 27 ♜xd5 is clearly hopeless.

24 e5 ♜b6 25 ♜xh7



25...♖e6 26 ♜g6+ ♜f7

26...♖e7 is met by 27 ♖e2 intending

h5 with the double mating threats of ♖e8 and ♗g5, while if 27...♙f7 then 28 ♗g5+ ♜e8 29 ♙g4 gives White all the winning chances.

27 ♖e4 ♙c7 28 h4 ♙xc4 29 ♙xc4 ♙c6 30 b3! g6 31 ♙e2 ♙e6 32 h5 ♖b7?! 33 ♖e4! ♖g7

White could play 34 ♙a8+ right here (34...♙f7 35 h6 ♖h7 36 ♖d8 and wins), but refines the idea by first clearing the way for his f-pawn to confine the black king even more.

34 hxg6 ♙xg6 35 f5 1-0

Black has had enough. Kasparov gives a possible conclusion 35...♙h6+ 36 ♙b1 ♖xg3 37 ♙d5! and wins.

“We were like bishops of opposite colour.” – former World Champion Boris Spassky, describing his first marriage.

Being aware of the tricks and traps in your opening can make all the difference, especially for an attacking player. Of course I would say that, having written a book for Everyman entitled *The Greatest Ever Chess Tricks and Traps*; but I can honestly say that at every tournament I attend at least one person reveals to me they have won a game with a line from that book.

The advantage of knowing tricks applies at every level, but it reminds me of a game played at the 2004 Olympiad. One of the Papua New Guinea team, Shaun Press, asked for some friendly advice from the Australian captain Manuel Weeks. After a dis-

cussion about which opening he would play, I watched as Weeks then showed him every trick possible and this actually worked:

Game 44

S.Press-M.Kumar

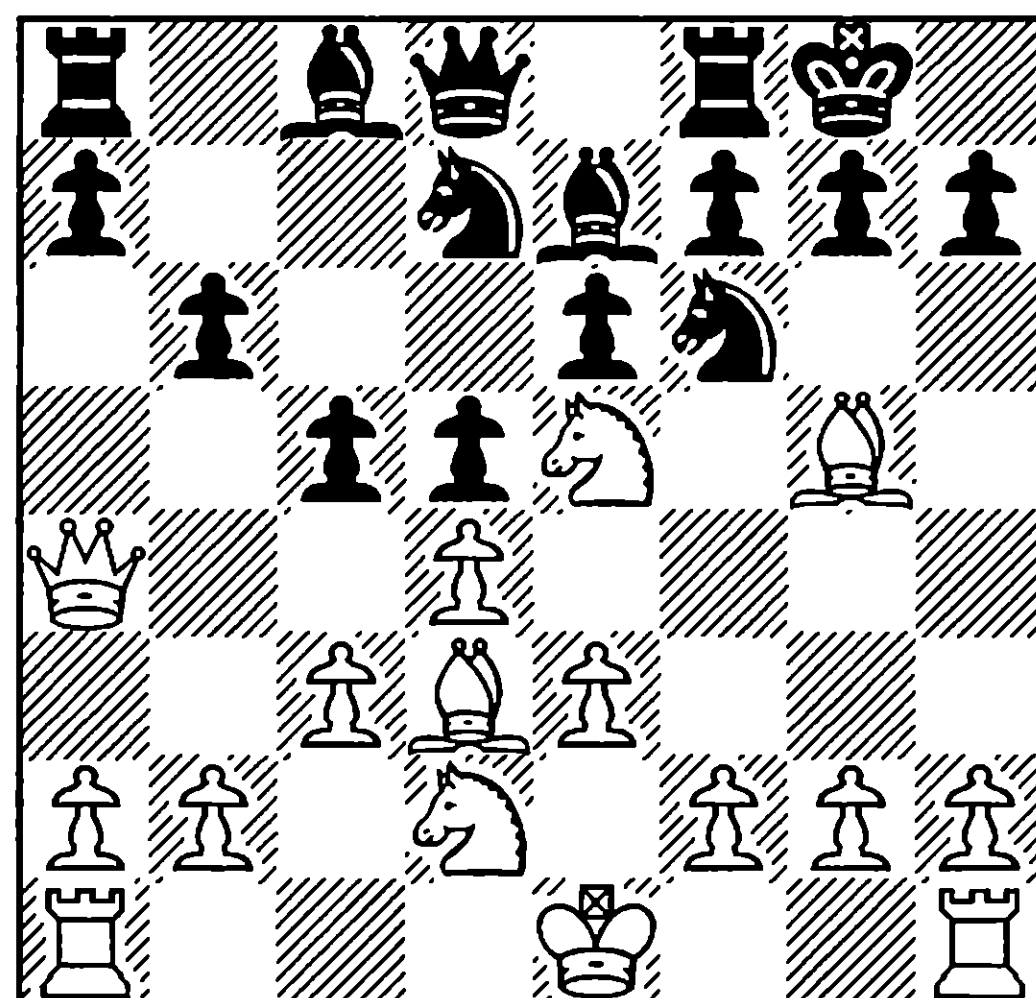
Calvia Olympiad 2004

Torre Attack

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♙g5

This is known as the Torre Attack.

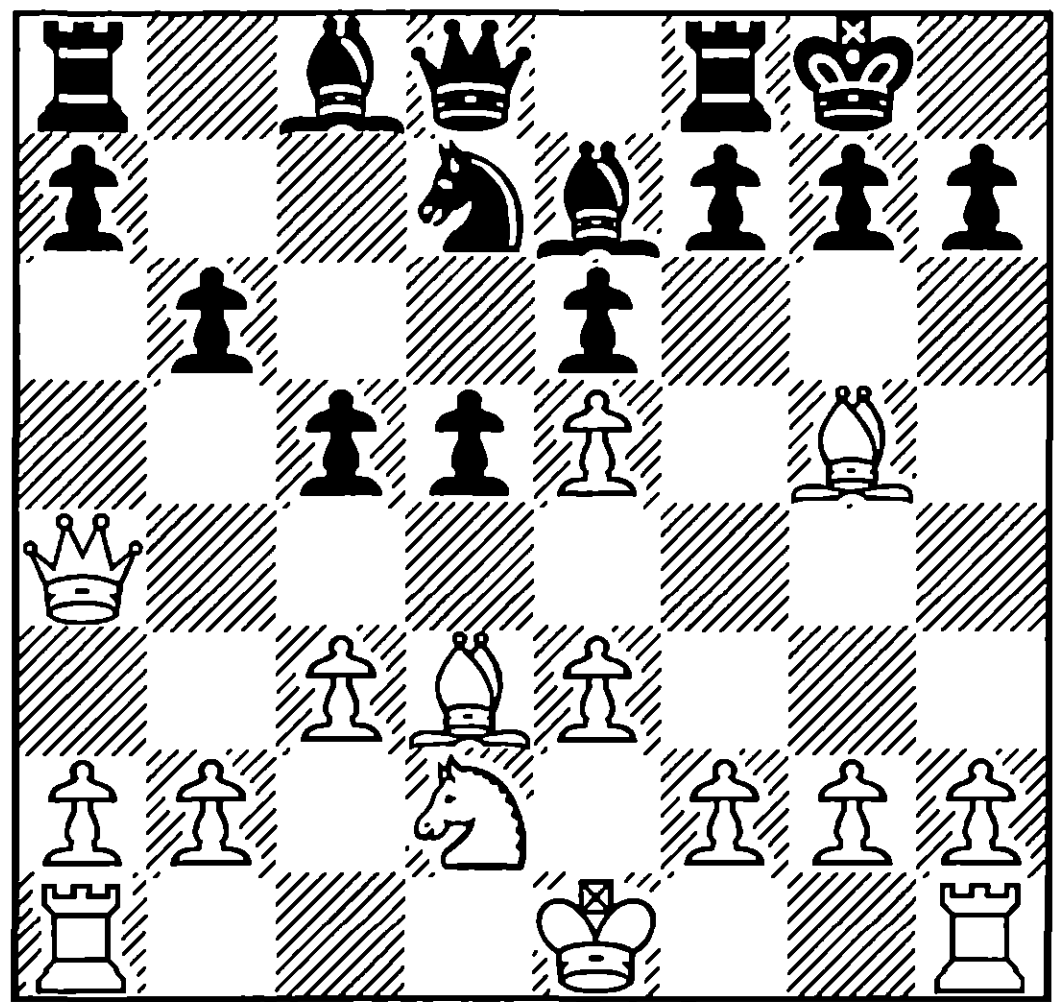
3...d5 4 e3 ♘bd7 5 ♙d3 c5 6 c3 ♙e7 7 ♘bd2 b6 8 ♙a4 0-0 9 ♘e5



9...♘xe5?

A natural move: Black wants to exchange the knight before White has a chance to prop it up with f2-f4. This is a common and correct strategy in a lot of lines of the Torre Attack, but here it just loses – which of course makes it a good trap. The player from Fiji, Manoj Kumar is renowned for his sharp play, but it counted for little when you know that *history always repeats*. Instead, simply 9...♙b7 offers equal chances.

10 dxe5 d7



11 ♔h4!

The difference from a lot of similar lines is now obvious: the white queen, seemingly oddly placed on a4, is able to sweep across to the kingside with devastating effect. The immediate threat is ♔xh7 mate, but it also creates a battery against e7 allowing White to win material. Of course, this has all been played before (several times), the earliest example I could find being V.Popov-Y.Benderov, Bulgarian Championship, Sofia 1943, in which Black resigned right here.

11...h6 12 ♔xe7 ♔e8

A year later I read in a magazine how a top Bulgarian female star had won quickly and brilliantly with exactly the same moves, though in that case Black found a novel way to resign: 12...♔xe7!? 13 ♔xe7 1-0 A.Stefanova-P.Ortega Morales., Benidorm (rapid) 1995. Just for the record the current game ended:

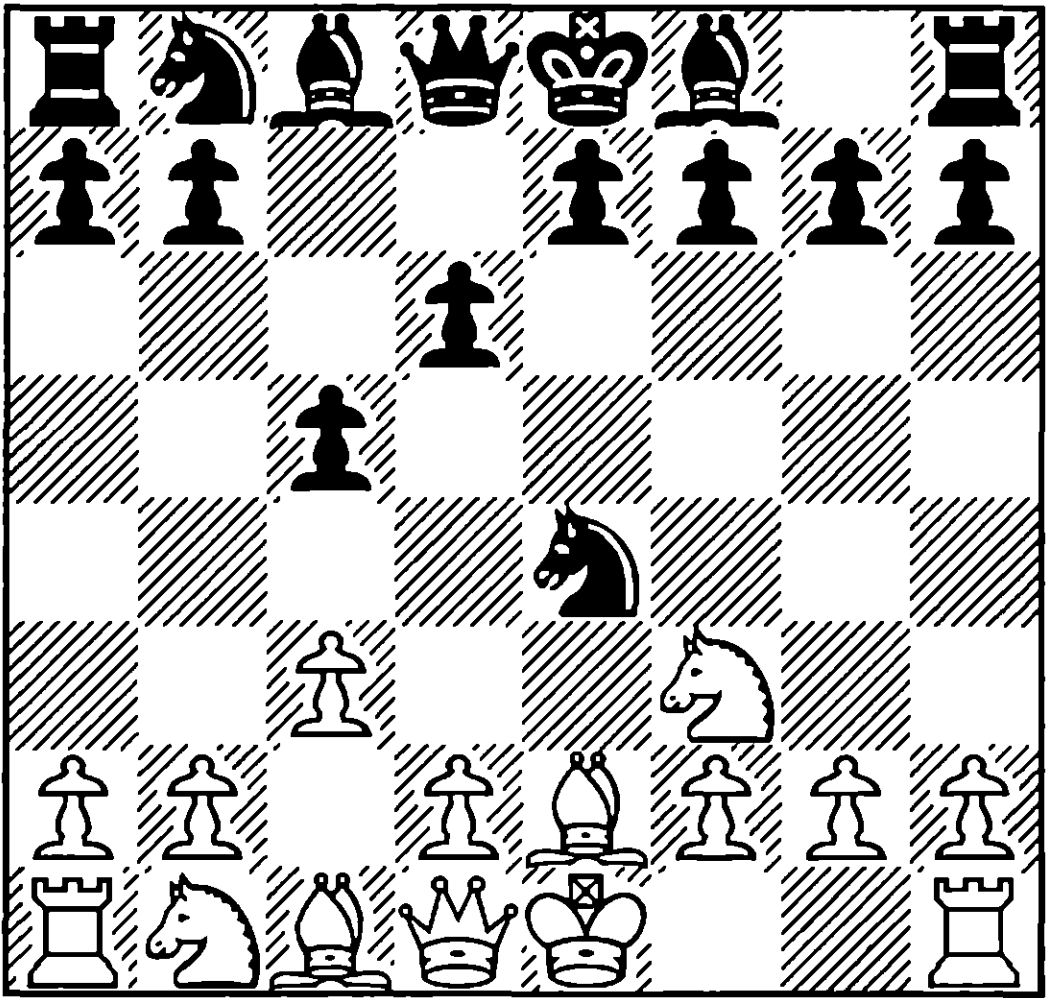
13 ♔xf8 ♔xf8 14 f4 ♔b7 15 ♔g1 a6 16 g4 ♔d8 17 g5 ♔f8 18 ♔h5 hxg5 19

♔xg5 ♔xg5 20 ♔xg5 g6 21 ♔f2 ♔g7 22 ♔ag1 ♔h6 23 ♔1g3 b5 24 ♔f3 ♔d8 25 h4 d4 26 cxd4 ♔xf3 27 ♔xf3 cxd4 28 h5 dxe3 29 ♔xe3 1-0

I have heard people dismiss opening tricks as being frivolous, the sort of thing that top players ignore. This is certainly not correct; it is more the case that the opposing top players do not usually fall for them. However, arguably the greatest ever attacking chess player, Garry Kasparov, is more than happy to play openings tricks if you give him a chance:

Game 45
G.Kasparov-J.Marikova
Prague (simul) 2008
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♔f3 d6 3 c3 ♔f6 4 ♔e2 ♔xe4?



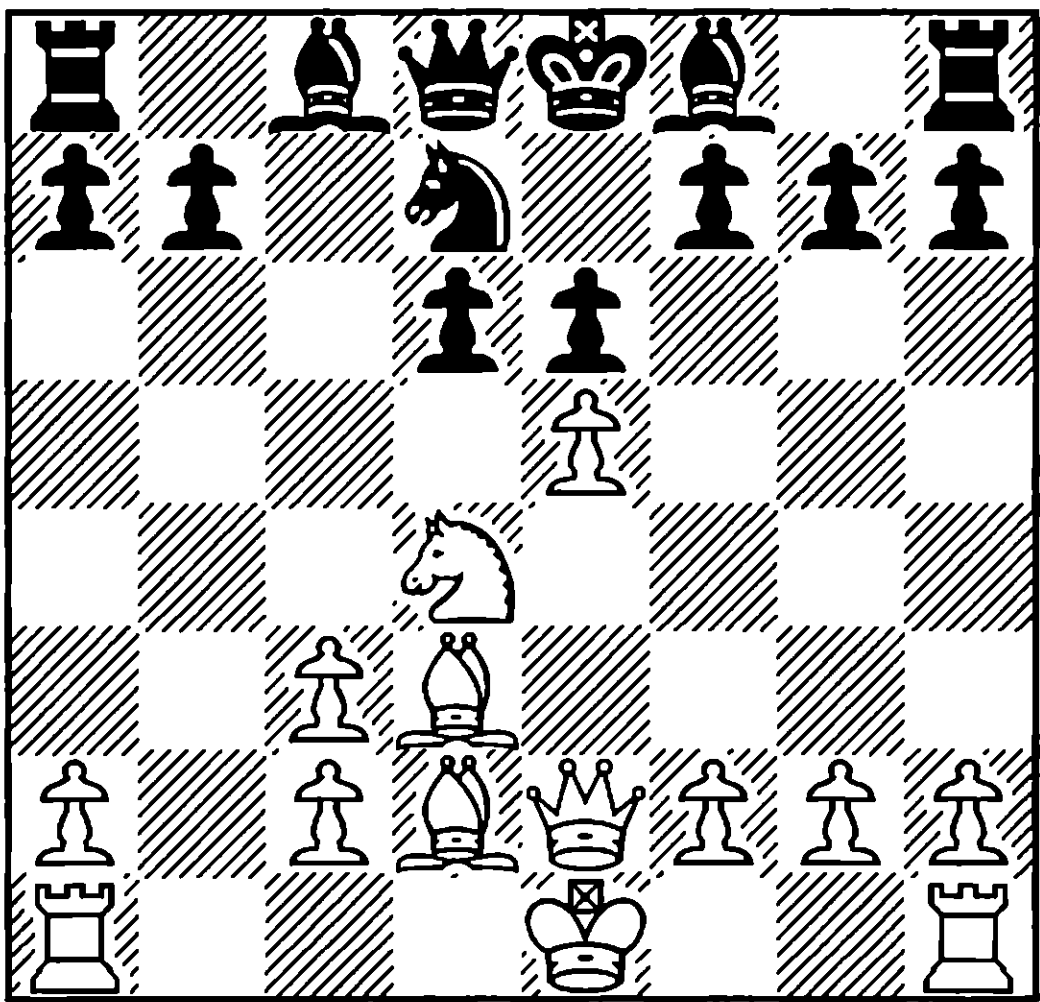
White to play

5 ♔a4+ 1-0
Oops.

This might only have been a simultaneous display with the great man playing many opponents at the same time, but he is quite content to win by an opening tactic. He also used such methods to good effect in his youth:

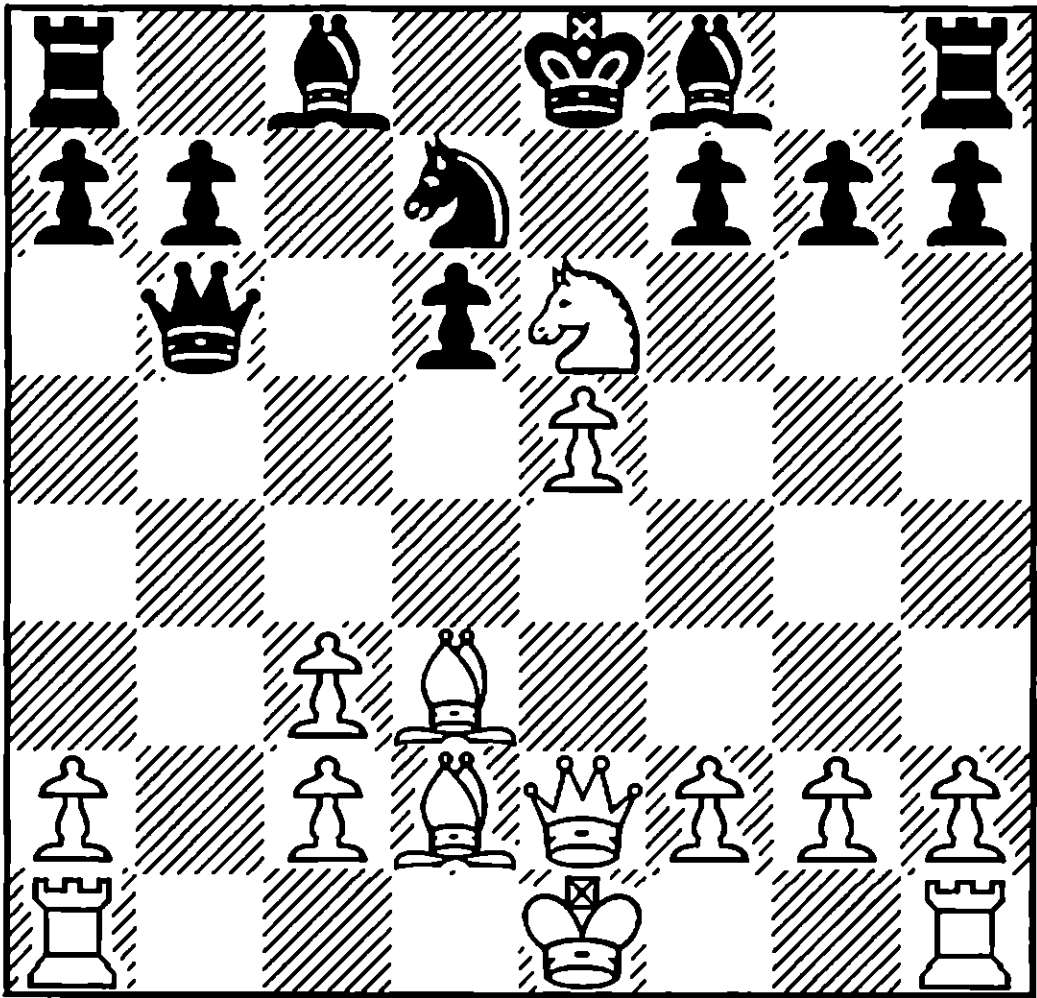
Game 46
G.Kasparov-G.West
Telex Olympiad 1977
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 e6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 Bb4 6 e5 Nd5 7 Bd2 Nxc3 8 bxc3 Bf8 9 Bd3 d6 10 Qe2 Nd7?



11 Nxe6! Qb6

11...fxe6 loses to 12 Wh5+ Qe7 (or 12...g6 13 Qxg6+ hxg6 14 Wxg6+ Qe7 15 Qg5+ Nf6 16 Wxf6+ Qd7 17 Wxd8+ wins) 13 Qg5+ Nf6 14 exf6+ gxf6 15 Qxf6+! Qxf6 16 Wh4+ and wins.



12 Nc7+! 1-0

A pretty finish, as 12...Qxc7 allows 13 exd6 with a discovered check, and the black queen will leave the board.

If opening tricks and traps are good enough for Kasparov, then the rest of us should pay attention to such ploys.

“It’s better to be a little over-confident than the opposite.” – Garry Kasparov.

Chapter Seven

Tricks of the Trade

“Kasparov came 3rd but almost fell.” – racehorses are sometimes named after chess players and this one was by Malaysian businessman Dato Tan Chin Nam, who also has *Catalan Opening* and *Ruy Lopez* in his stables. The racing colours: a chess board with yellow sleeves and a black and white checked cap.

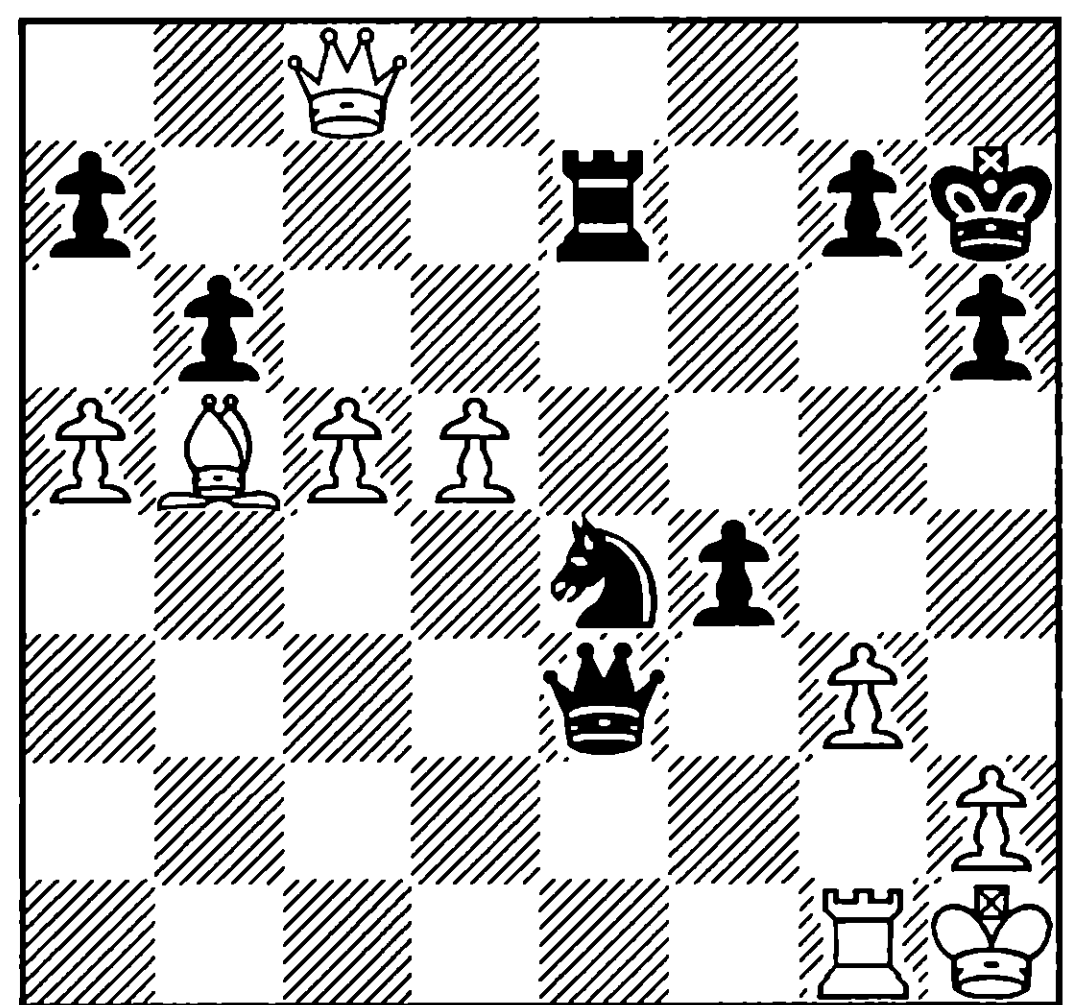
In this chapter I round things off with some practical pointers that I have observed or, more likely, used over the years. It is all very well to sharpen your attacking skills, but even if your play is stunning no one will remember if the result is wrong for you. Therefore, I present a few tips on: how to conduct yourself at tournament, the dreaded time-trouble scenario, psychology, incentives to keep playing in drawn positions, the internet, and why you should turn off your phone.

The winner is.....!

Now that everyone is primed and ready to prepare to attack, it is right to men-

tion that some etiquette is required when on the verge of victory.

A.Kotov-Y.Averbakh
USSR Championship,
Moscow 1948



Black to play

Yuri Averbakh finished off a pretty game with a neat finish, but it is what he said to his opponent that haunted him – to such an extent that fifty years later he was still apologizing in his

book of best games. He wrote: "Here I could not restrain myself and I declared 'it is mate in five moves!'"

45...♔f3+

Actually, he could have declared mate in three: 45...♘f2+ 46 ♔g2 f3+! 47 ♘e1 ♔e1 mate was quicker.

46 ♖g2 ♘f2+ 47 ♔g1 ♖e1+ 0-1

White did not want to see the prediction come true and avoided 48 ♙f1 ♘h3+ and 49...♖xf1 mate.

I have also witnessed a club player suddenly announcing a forthcoming checkmate, which not only surprised his club mates but didn't seem to please his opponent from a rival club either, who seemed to go white with anger. It turned out in his case, and no doubt Averbakh too, that it stems from a love of correspondence chess. It seems bizarre now but in the old days, before e-mail, players might have to wait for weeks for their post to arrive from some far off country. In an effort to speed up the process they would often write down any forced sequence of moves to save time and money. Hence the standard reason for declaring a checkmate. You can hardly blame them when you consider that the first World Correspondence Champion, the Australian Cecil Purdy, won the title in 1953 three years after he had posted his first move.

Watch the clock

"We like to think." – Garry Kasparov, when asked by chess writer and player

Hans Ree why he and Karpov get into time-trouble.

The best thing to do with time-trouble is to make sure, if it happens, that your opponent is the one to experience it. I am guilty of sometimes slipping into the situation where I have to rush my moves and then the result becomes a lottery, but I have managed over the years to reduce my losses due to this fault. Here are some hints.

1. Have a safe move available.

There are occasions when the player with more time fails to apply pressure and just makes an improving move, so it is useful to have a safe move ready.

2. Look for the trick.

The temptation for the player with more time is to play for a trap, on the assumption that his opponent will miss it. This is a transparent approach that can be identified at an early stage and stopped.

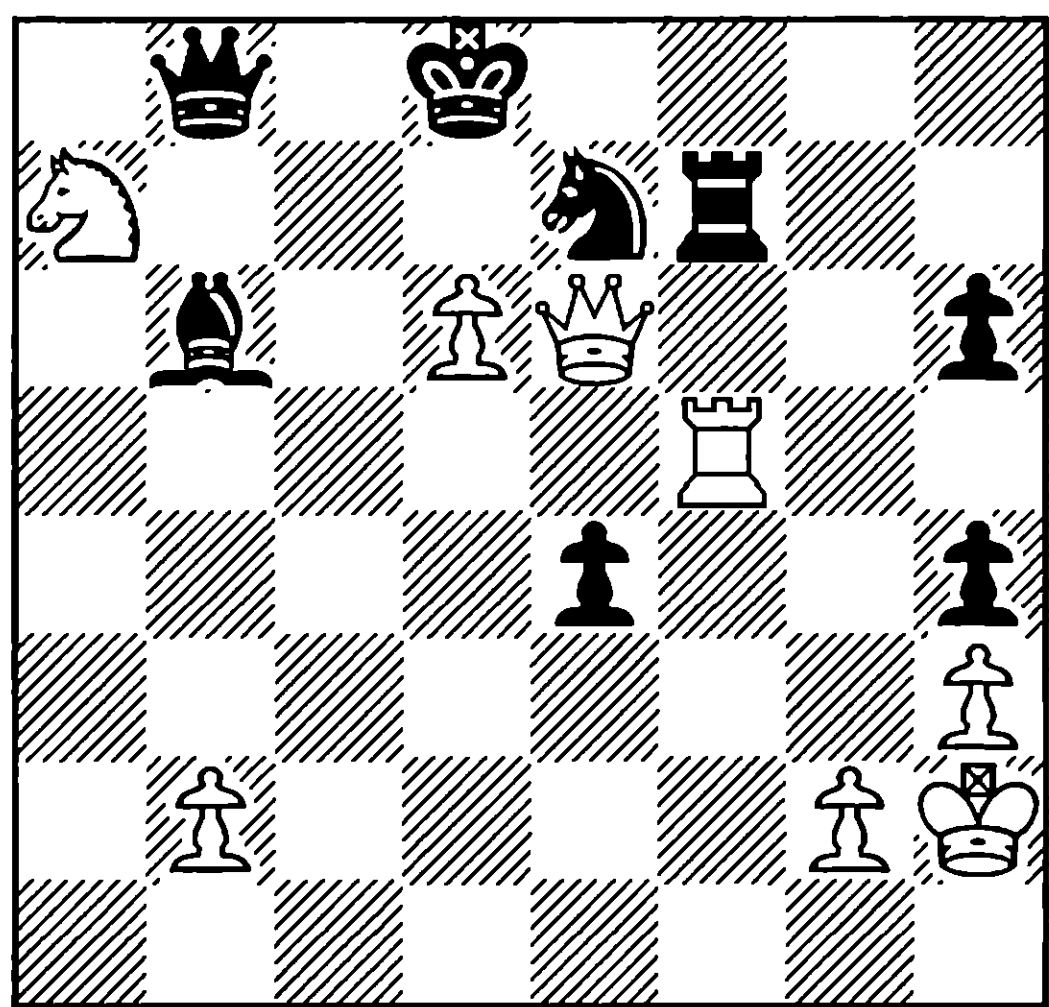
3. Find a plan.

While your opponent is thinking, tick off the first two rules and find a constructive plan.

Having a problem with time-trouble leads to so many games being decided by blunders. There is a tendency to overcompensate and play quicker than usual, with less time spent on critical positions, and it is not possible to see

every possibility in the space of, say, thirty seconds. There is an argument that, because everyone likes to play quick games with friends or on the internet, people should be used it. The flaw in that reasoning is that if you lose on the internet you can play again within minutes, whereas after a four-hour marathon you really don't want to throw away your hard earned advantage in a matter of seconds. I should emphasize that it can happen to anybody, such as in the following heavyweight encounter:

J.Arnason-J.Timman
Reykjavik 1987

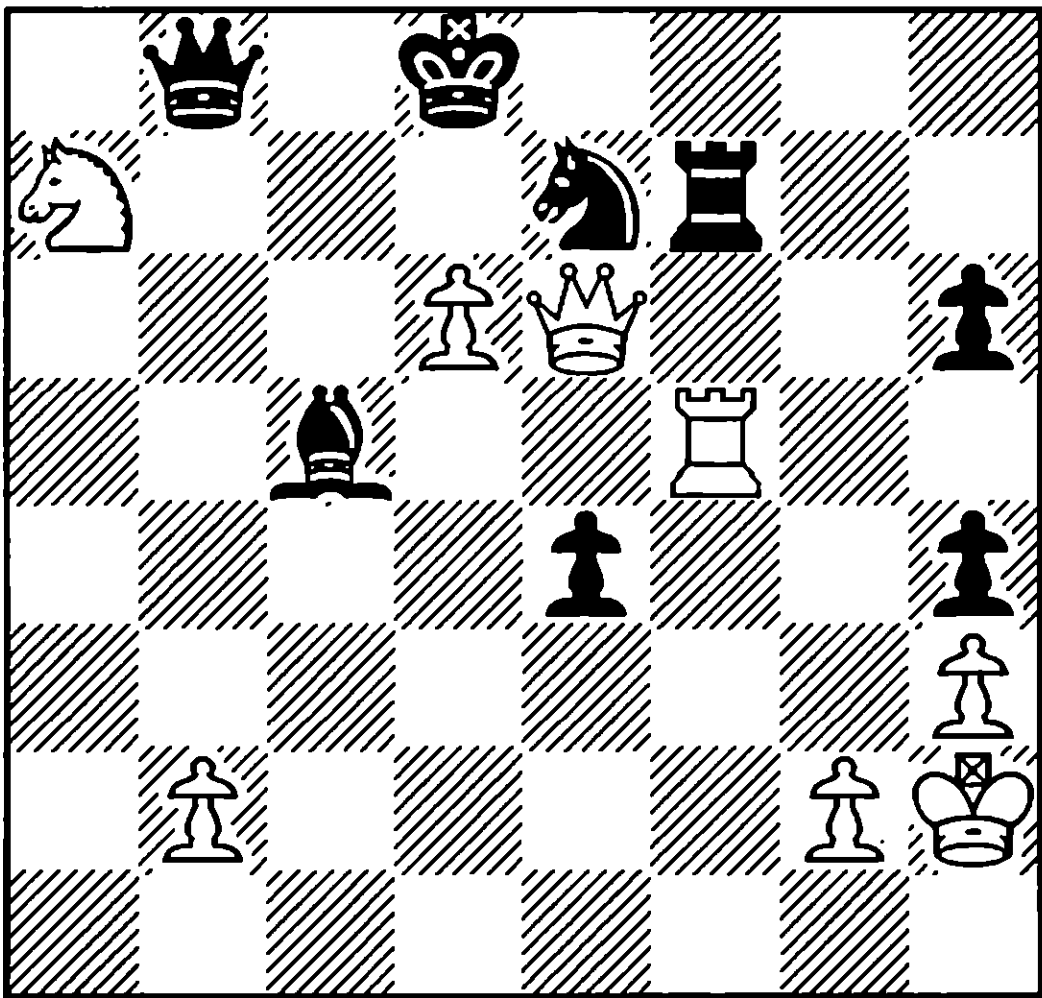


Black to play

40...♗c5

White is in desperate time-trouble and, like any good practical player, Timman comes up with a bizarre way to confuse him, in this case by allowing him to take another piece. In his book

of selected games Timman reveals what was going through his mind: "I saw that White could simply take the bishop, but with all black pieces bar the queen being under threat I did not think it very likely that White would take the piece that was only being attacked once. And Arnason did lose his bearings in the last thirty seconds."



41 ♖xf7?

The simplest win is 41 ♖xc5 when the computer declares a forced mate. For example: 41...♖g7 42 ♖c8+ ♔xc8 (or 42...♘xc8 43 ♘c6 mate) 43 dxe7+ ♔c7 44 ♔xc8+ and it is becoming embarrassing for Black.

41...♔xd6+ 42 ♔xd6+ ♗xd6+ 43 ♔h1 e3 44 ♔g1 ♗c5 0-1

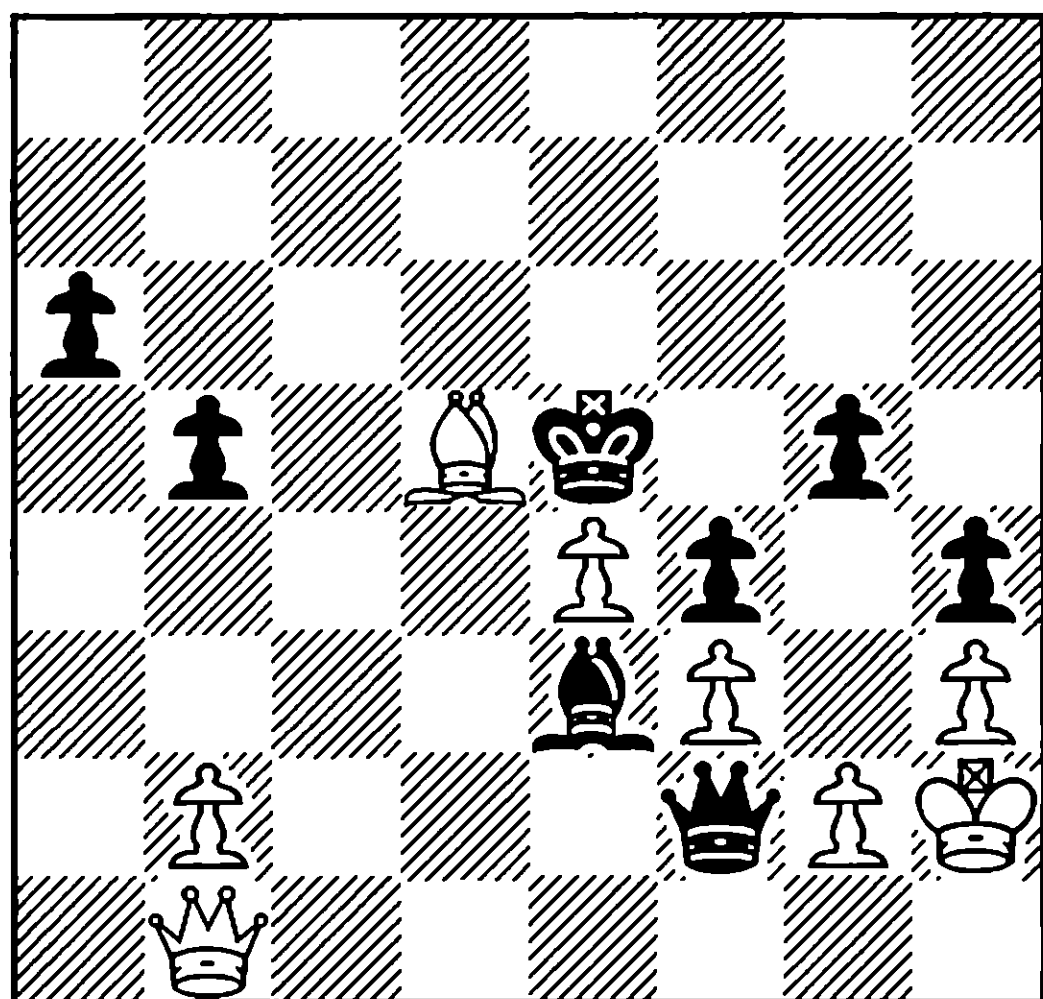
The position after 45 ♔f1 is drawn, but here White lost on time.

Missed Opportunity

An attacking player may be pleased if he can salvage something from a lost position, but my opinion that time-trouble can fog the brain of anyone is borne out by the following example, in

which world title contender David Bronstein failed to spot a routine mating combination the great maestro would normally find blindfold:

V.Savon-D.Bronstein Petropolis Interzonal 1973



Black to play

53...♔d6?

A sensible move but not a winning one. Instead, Black can crash through on the kingside with 53...g4! 54 fxg4 (no better is 54 hxg4 h3 55 ♖h1 ♕g3 mate, or 54 ♕d1 gxf3 55 ♖xf3 ♕g1 mate) 54...f3 55 ♖h1 ♙f4 mate.

54 b4 ♙d2

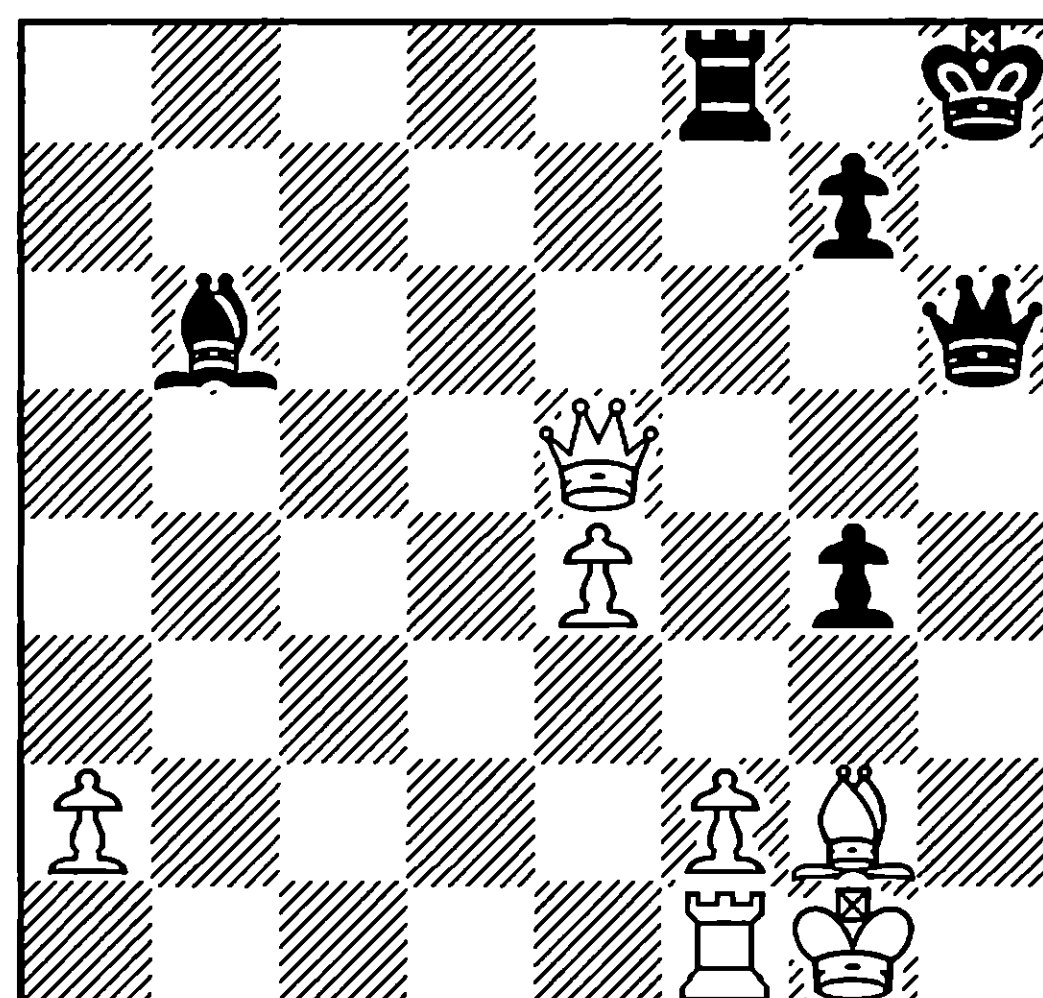
54...g4 is now thwarted by 55 e5+! ♔xd5 56 ♕e4+ ♔e6 57 ♕c6+ and the black king cannot escape the checks.

55 ♕a1 ♕g3+ 56 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 57 ♕xe1 ♙xe1 58 ♙b7 ♙xb4 59 ♙xa6 ♔c6 60 ♔g1 1/2-1/2

Here is another reminder that you

are not alone when going wrong in time-trouble, though the solution is quite clever:

V.Anand-V.Topalov Dortmund 2001



Black to play

40...♕h4?

Even a top-class player like Topalov sometimes needs to reach the time-control with a safe move. Otherwise he would surely find the crafty 40...♖f4! (threatening 41...g3), when 41 ♕c3 ♕h4 (again threatening the winning ...g4-g3) gives White little choice but to resign.

41 ♕h2 ♙xf2+ 42 ♔h1 ♕xh2+

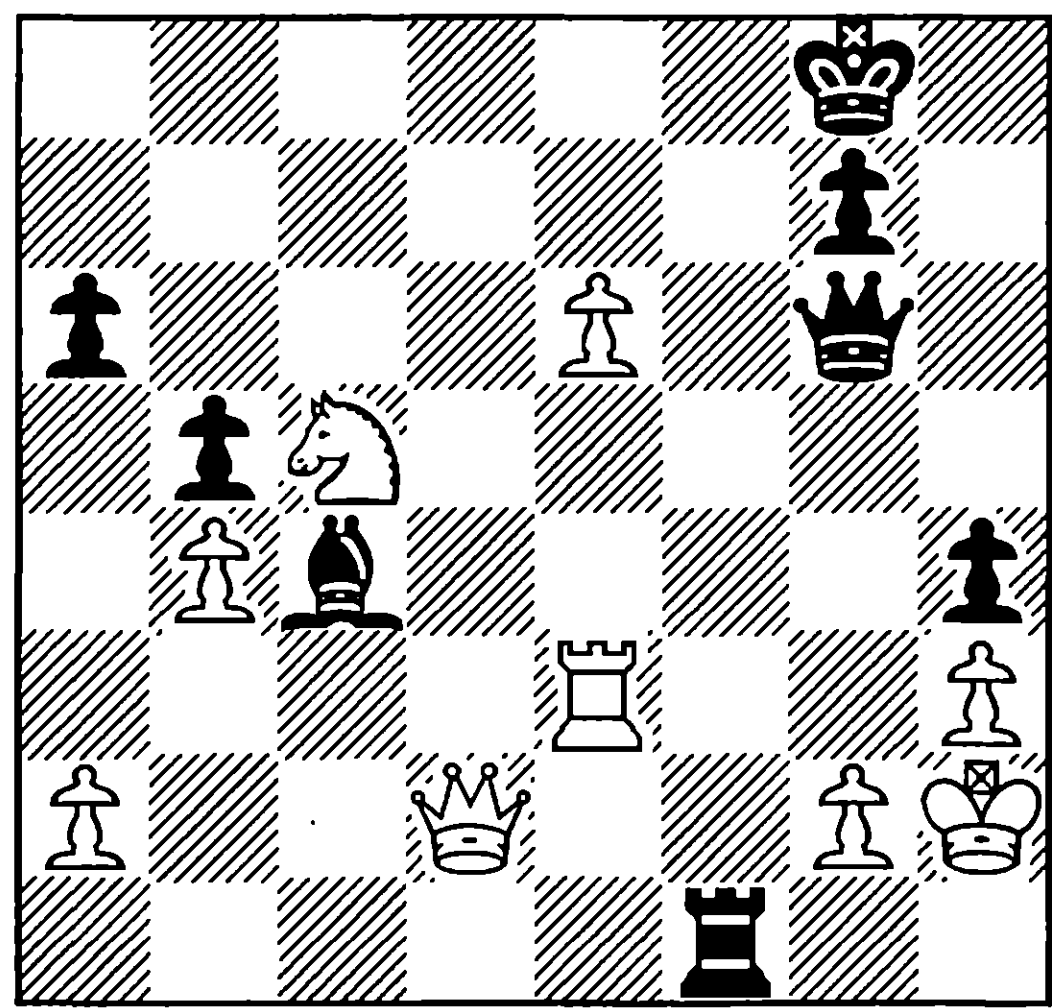
Or 42...g5 43 ♕xh4+ gxh4 44 a4! h3 45 ♙xh3 gxh3 46 a5 and the advancing a-pawn secures the draw.

43 ♔xh2

And the game continued for another 41 moves, though Topalov did win in the end.

I can add my own experience of trying to play a series of moves when you only have thirty seconds left on the clock. In the following game I blow my chance of beating an Australian grandmaster, due to the pressure of playing a move, any move to reach the time-control:

Zong Yuan Zhao-G.Lane
New South Wales Open 2010



Black to play

40...♔f6?

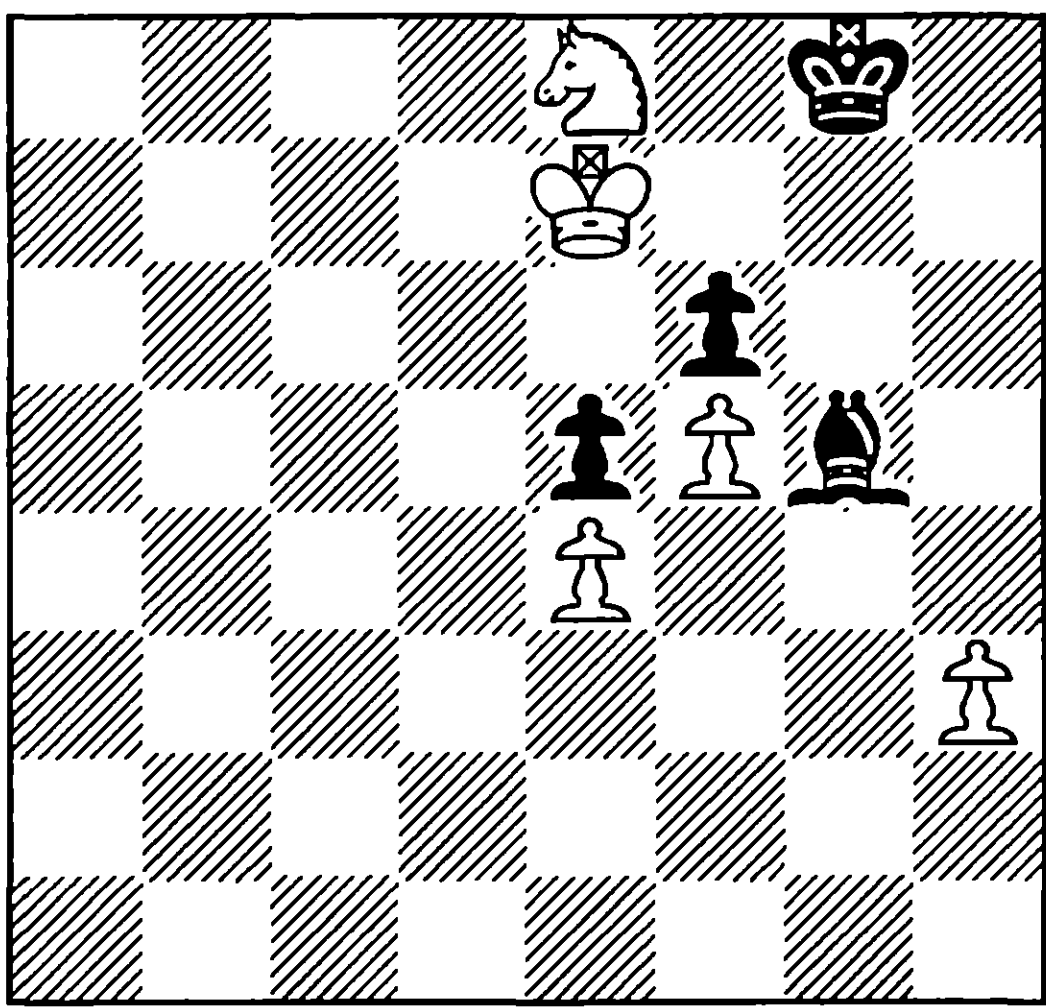
As soon as I made this move I realized that I had gone wrong. The idea was to play ...♔f4+, but this ploy would have been much better executed by 40...♔g5! which pins the rook and wins. For example: 41 ♔d4 (41 e7? ♔f4+ 42 g3 hxg3+ 43 ♖xg3 ♔xd2+ leads to mate) 41...♙d5 42 ♘e4 (forced, due to the threat of mate on g2) 42...♔f4+ 43 g3 ♙xe4! 44 ♔d8+ (not 44 gxf4? ♖h1 mate, or 44 ♔xe4? hxg3+ 45 ♖xg3

♔xe4 and wins) 44 ♖h1 45 ♔xh4 ♔xh4 46 gxf4 ♙c6 and Black is just a piece up.
41 ♖e4! ♖f2 42 ♔e3 ♖xa2?
42...♖e2 puts up more of a fight.
43 e7 ♔d6+ 44 ♔f4 ♔xf4+ 45 ♖xf4 ♖e2 46 ♖f8+ 1-0

The Ending

One would think that, with fewer pieces on the board, the curse of time-trouble would have less influence, but again and again it does make a difference:

D.Mackle-J.Rudd
Devon Championship 2009



White to play

White is just about to cause an upset by beating the top seed, who is an international master. Can time-trouble really ruin such an ending?

58 ♘xf6+?

The answer is yes, he can mess it up

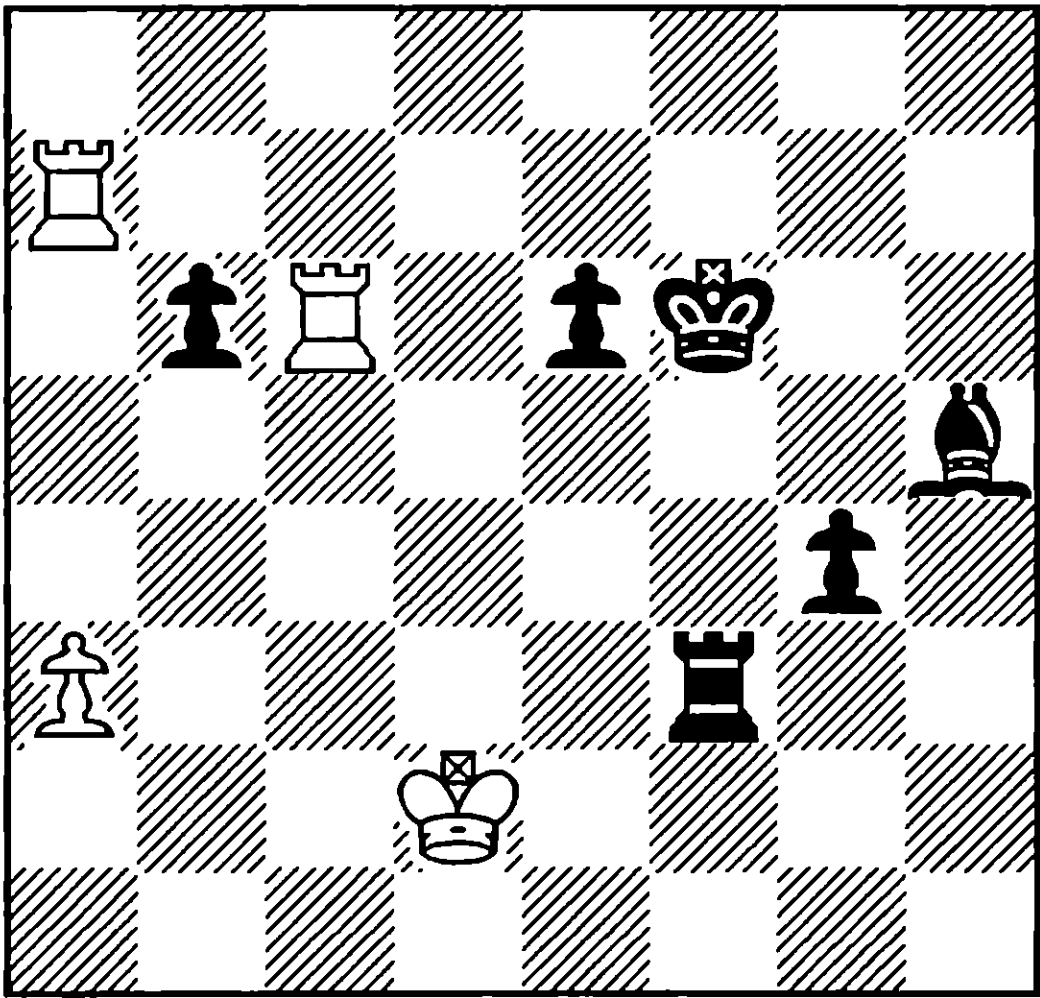
in time trouble. This obvious move throws away the win, whereas the simple 58 ♖e6 would allow White to capture the pawn next move and expect Black's resignation.

58...♔g7! 59 ♔e6 ♕xf6 60 h4!

White is fortunate that he still has this move to draw – after which it was probably disappointment that made him carry on for a few more pointless moves.

60...♕xh4 61 ♔xe5 ♔f7 62 ♔f4 ♕e1 63 e5 ♕b4 64 ♔e4 ♕e7 65 ♔d5 ♕g5 66 ♔d6 ♕f4 67 f6 ♕g3 68 ♔d5 ♕h4 ½-½

P.Kostenko-Ni Hua
Calcutta 2009



White to play

After 41 ♖xb6 g3 the game is heading for a draw (for example, 42 ♖b8 g2 43 ♖f8+ ♔g5 44 ♖g7+ ♕g6 45 ♖xg6+ ♔xg6 46 ♖g8+ ♔f5 47 ♖xg2 ♖xa8 48 ♖g8 with a simple draw), but again time-trouble is the deciding factor.

41 ♖c3??

A moment of madness, but it should be obvious by now that both elite or casual players can suffer when there is no time to think.

41...♖xc3 42 ♔xc3 g3 0-1

It only now dawned on White that the g-pawn is unstoppable, in view 43 ♖a8 g2 44 ♖g8 ♕g6!, which blocks the rook and allows the pawn to promote.

My Opponent is in time-trouble

This classic problem is seen when you have to console a friend who relates that his opponent was in time-trouble, but inexplicably he is the one who lost. There are a number of factors that can contribute to the attacking player coming away second best, but I believe the following guidelines should prove useful:

1. It is not a blitz game.

The number one problem that I observe when players fail to make the most of their opponent's time-trouble is a desire to play super fast. In other words, when their opponent is teetering on the edge with only a couple of minutes left, they start to play as quickly as possible, trying to win on time. In that case, of course, you might as well only have two minutes on the clock yourself. A far better strategy when you have extra time, and the position is level or better for you, is to use that time to think of a plan. If you can string to-

gether a series of moves which positively enhance your position, then someone with no time is hardly going to put up a stout defence. My favourite idea *predict-a-move* works wonders in such situations. There's really no need to show desperation by, say, attacking the queen and being surprised when they spot such an obvious threat. On the other hand, if you are losing then it is fair enough to try and conjure up a trick or two, but at least put some thought into it. A little combination can be the perfect salvation, but you usually need to find a way to lure your opponent into it, and that is where your extra time can help.

2. Remember chess patterns.

The tactics tend to flow in time-trouble, so a cool head is required to be on the alert for possible combinations. The defender is prone to blunder, but you do have to up the pressure.

3. All the time in the world.

It is worth remembering that you do not necessarily have to win within your opponent's time limit. If more time is due to be allocated, then why not seek to *cash in your chips* and convert your advantage into something more concrete, such as an extra pawn. It will be worth the wait once victory is achieved. Furthermore, you are perfectly entitled to go for a short walk to look at other boards while your opponent has to remain seated; often the tension can be

so great that, when you eventually wander back, they can no longer take the strain and make a mistake.

The last word can go to the writer George Koltanowski from his book *TV Chess*, in which he relates a great story about notorious time-trouble addict, grandmaster Fritz Sämisch (who is also known for lending his name to a variation in the King's Indian Defence):

"When he started in his first important tournament in Berlin, 1920, he took an hour for his first move, 25 minutes for his second move, 15 minutes for his third move, ten minutes for his fourth move, five minutes for his fifth move, and from then on, he would play the rest of the game in rapid-transit style, having only five minutes left for 35 moves. Most of his opponents used to go berserk, waiting around for him to move. They wondered if he was up to something deep, or new, or was just balmy. But when Sämisch started to play rapid-transit chess, they would follow suit, because they felt Sämisch did not have much time on his clock. They were sure that if they played fast, he would soon blunder. But Fritz didn't blunder. In fact, he was in his element and could outsmart most of the opponents in rapid play. Outcome? He would end up winning with great ease, with his opponent having something like an hour and 50 minutes left on his clock and a red face! Soon after his debut, participants would turn up with a de-

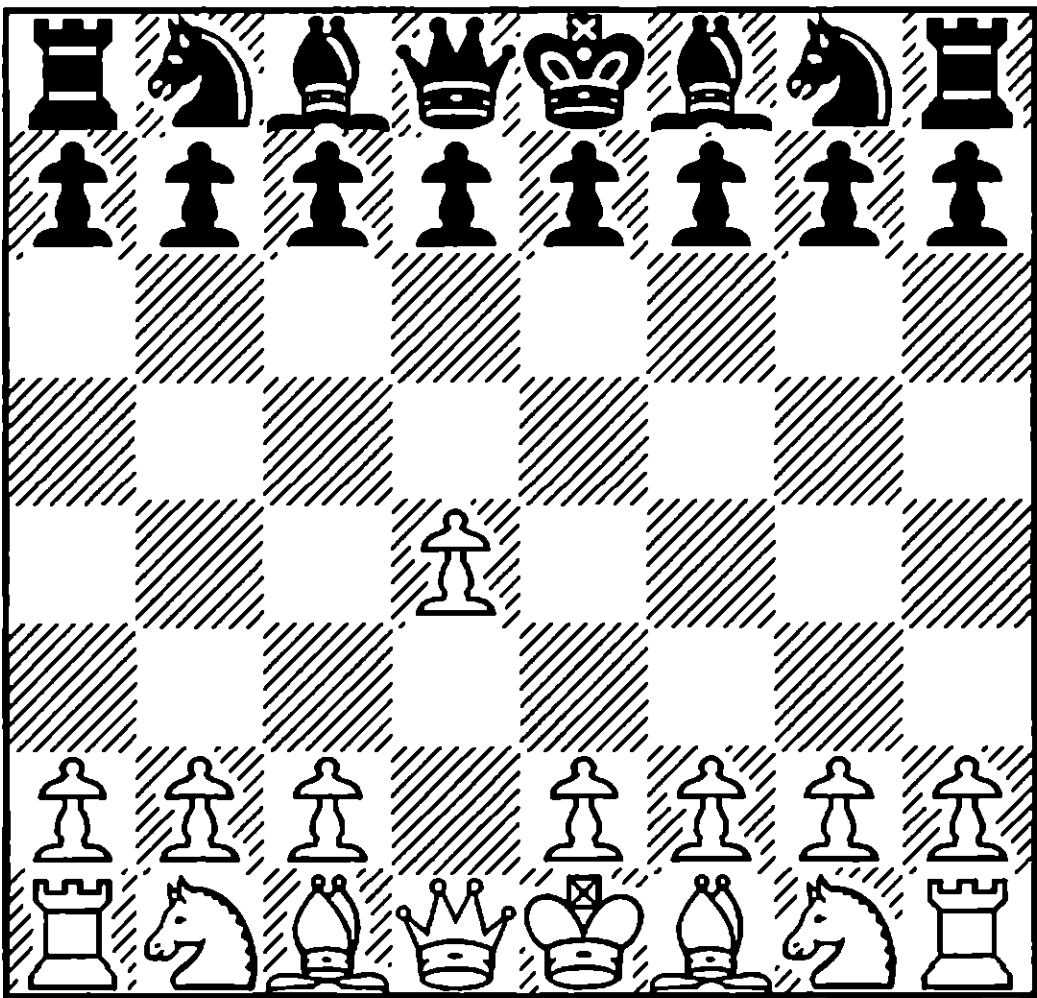
lective book to calm their nerves while waiting for Sämisch to move and really slowed up when Sämisch started to rush matters! ...”

Maybe this is why chess clocks with faster time-limits became so popular.

Please don’t leave your name and number

The joy of being an attacking player is that you can spot the winning move increasingly by accumulating mating patterns or combinational motifs. Here is the ultimate test, played at the 2009 European Team Championship. White is proudly representing Bulgaria and Black is upholding the honour of England in a vital match. What happened next?

Game 47
A.Delchev-S.Conquest
European Team
Championship, Novi Sad 2009
Queen’s Pawn Opening

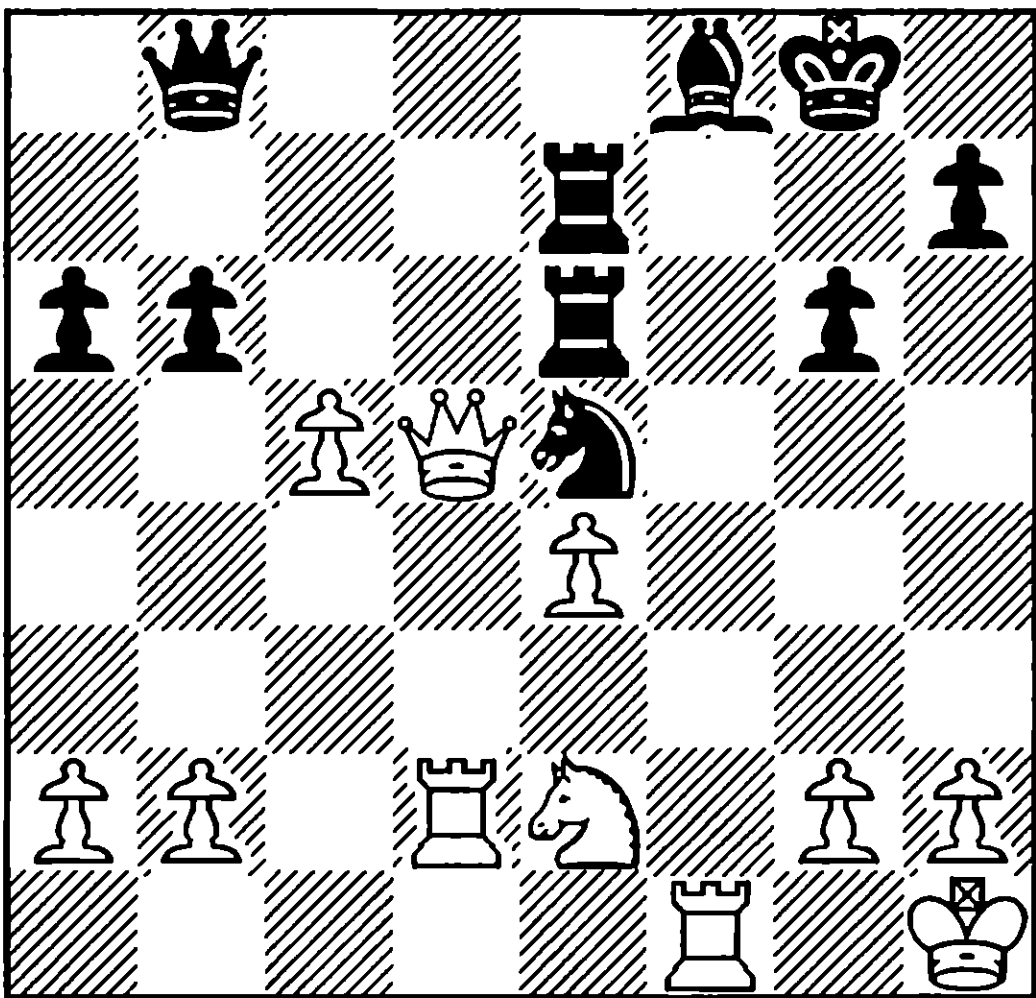


1 d4 0-1

After playing his first move Alexander Delchev’s mobile phone rang and, according to the current rules of chess, the arbiter was obliged to default him and award the game to Black. It is a timely reminder to everyone to turn off their phone; there is no point playing a glorious attack, only to have a friend text you to find out the result and make you lose.

A final few words of advice to the loser in this game: when your phone rings loudly from a pocket in your jacket, don’t pretend to look around for the source of the noise – and especially not if it is all being filmed and ends up on the internet on *YouTube*.

And to Ukrainian’s Ruslan Ponomariov’s mother: when your son is playing Evgeny Agrest of Sweden...



...please do not phone to wish him a happy birthday. The result 1-0.

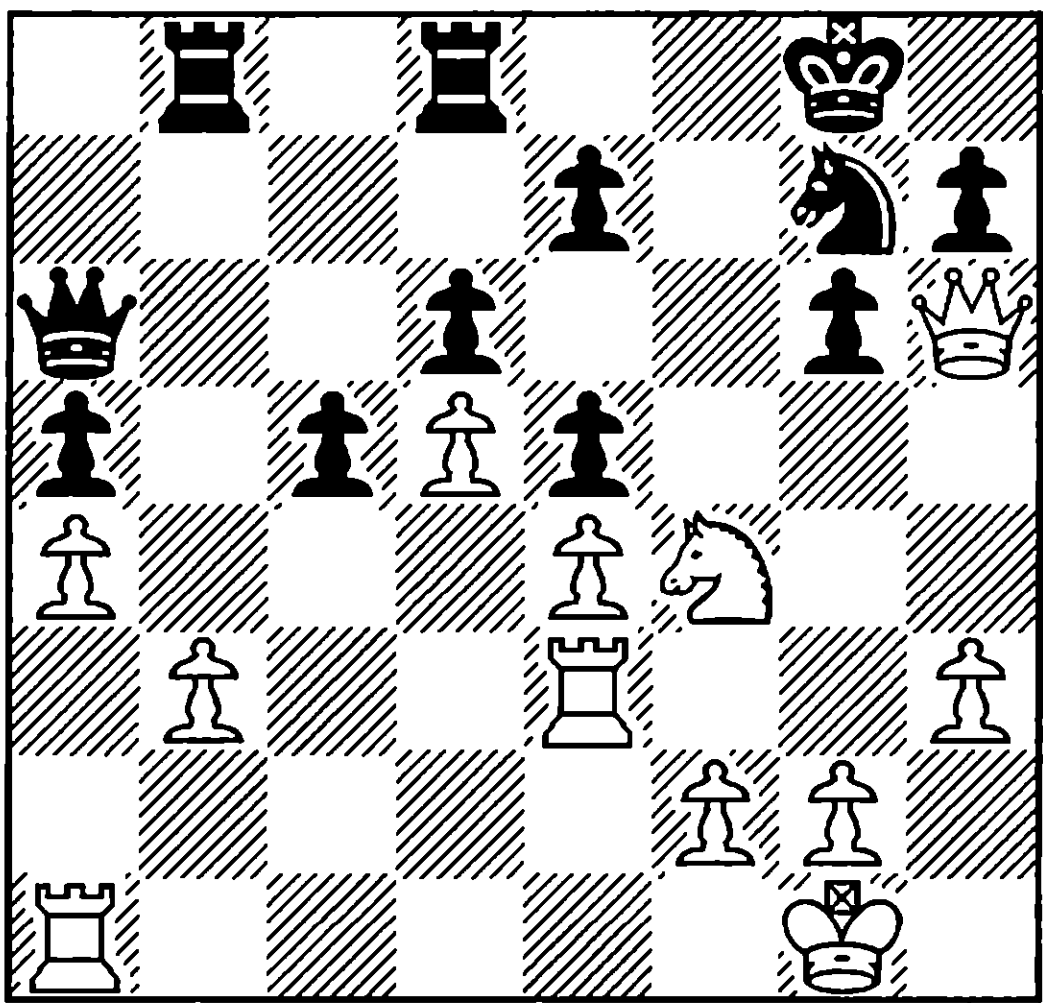
Amazing Moves

I am always keen to teach the merits of being alert throughout the game and that, of course, also applies to defence.

Take this frankly amazing example of a grandmaster losing to a junior, which was the biggest shock in the entire nine rounds of the tournament in more ways than one:

Game 48
A.Ansell-D.K.Johansen
Parramatta 2010
Modern Benoni

1 d4 c5 2 d5 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 g6 4 c4 ♙g7 5 ♘c3 d6 6 ♙f4 0-0 7 ♚d2 a6 8 e4 ♚a5 9 ♙d3 b5 10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 h3 bxc4 12 ♙xc4 ♚b4 13 ♙d3 a5 14 a3 ♚b6 15 ♖fe1 ♙b7 16 ♘a4 ♚d8 17 ♙h6 ♖e8 18 ♙xg7 ♚xg7 19 ♘c3 ♚b6 20 ♙b5 ♖ed8 21 a4 ♚c7 22 b3 ♖ab8 23 ♚b2 ♙g8 24 ♚d2 ♘e8 25 ♚h6 f6 26 ♘e2 ♘g7 27 ♙c4 ♚b6 28 ♘f4 ♙a6 29 ♙xa6 ♚xa6 30 ♖e3 ♘e5 31 ♘xe5 fxe5

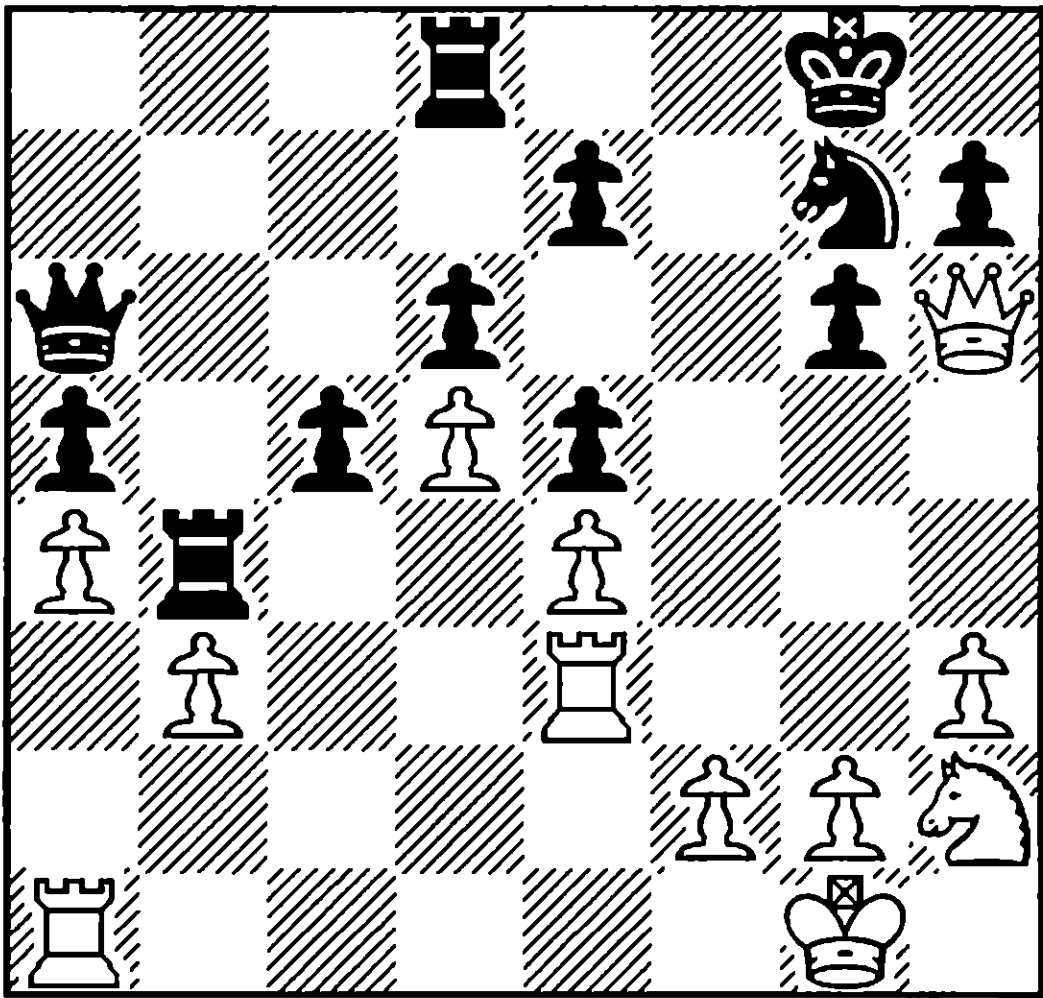


In this position White is in time-trouble, while his grandmaster opponent has 12 minutes left on the clock, but who could predict a mating attack within a handful of moves?

32 ♘h2!!

This was innocently played but turns out to be a star move. Yes, it is illegal to jump from f4 to h2, but no body noticed. It was left to the hapless bulletin editor to ask the embarrassing question to the grandmaster whether he had written the moves down wrong. I don't think you can get a greater example of looking at the board closely for threats, combinations – and illegal moves!

32...♖b4



33 ♘f3

I later asked Darryl Johansen about his loss and he looked wistfully into the distance, before recalling it was only at this point in the game that he wondered how he had missed such an obvious attack, because the knight heading to g5 is crushing. It has apparently never happened to him in the past, and I predict will never happen again.

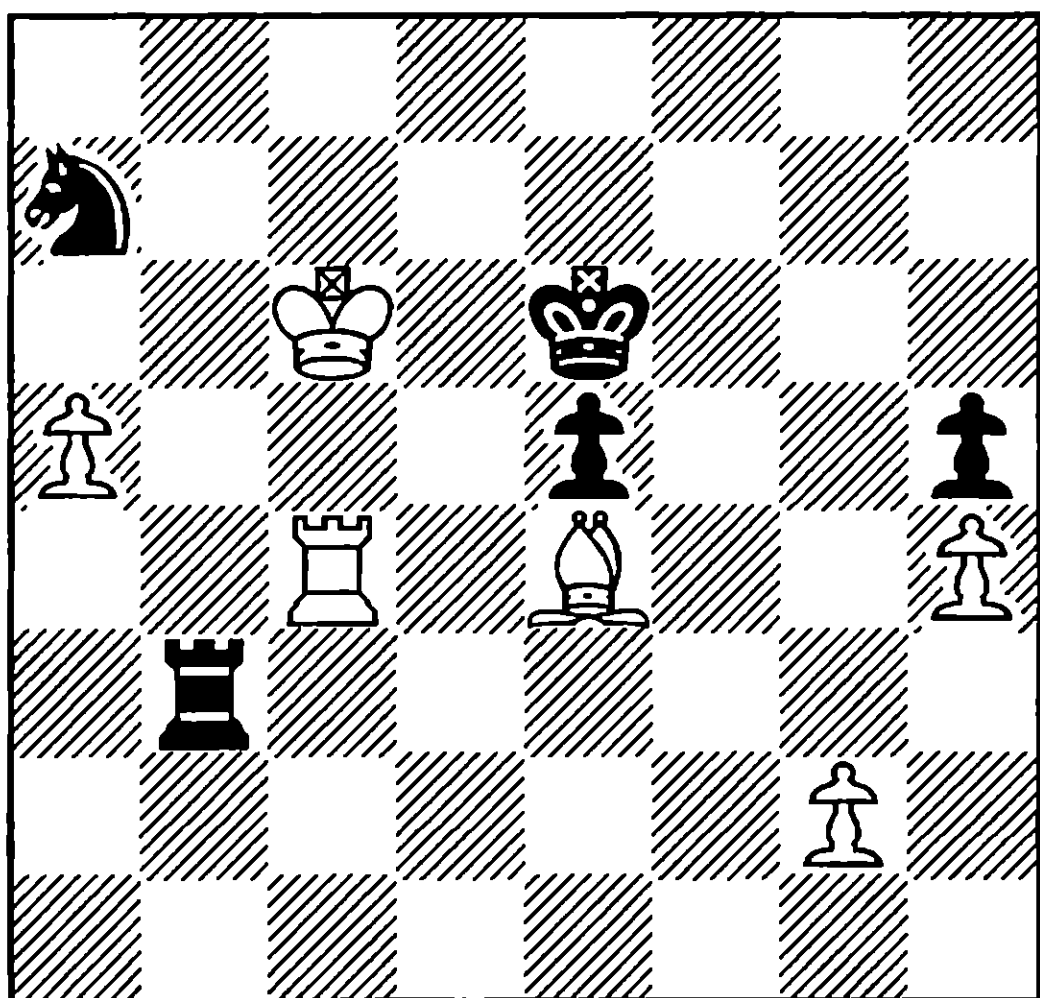
33...♘h5 34 ♘g5 ♘f6 35 ♘e6 1-0

It would be more appropriate to play amazing moves that the arbiter would agree were legal.

Draw!

There will be times when your attack does not work out, it is not your day, and you need to agree a draw. That's fine, but the attacking player can even extract something from the moment that the win seems to have slipped away. I have quite often seen people about to repeat the position three times and agree a draw in accordance with chess rules, only for them to play something completely different and lose. You can also use psychology in such cases by offering a draw after the second time you repeat moves: if the draw is accepted then so be it, but a refusal can lead to surprising results.

G.Guseinov-B.Grachev European Championship, Budva 2009



White to play

White is certainly no slouch, being rated 2661 at the time. After the se-

quence 61 ♖c7 ♜b5+ 62 ♖c6 ♜a7+, rather than repeat again with 63 ♔c7, he decided to avoid the draw – though perhaps not quite in the way he anticipated:

63 ♔c5??

A catastrophic blunder.

63...♖b5 mate

I have always wondered if only a few people had this feeling that a draw offer could actually be a psychological blow, so I was delighted to read the American star, Yasser Seirawan, discussing the subject in the book *Interview With a Grandmaster*. He said:

“Draw offers can be crippling and I think that it’s a very underestimated subject. The draw offer gives you an opportunity to think about all the scenarios within the game.

“I know that I’m better, but boy a draw doesn’t hurt me in the tournament, I could still win a prize and maybe even a trophy and even if I’m better I’m still a little behind on time. Unfortunately, now I’ve been thinking about it for so long, I’m way behind on time.” So, the draw can really be a potent weapon: *I can’t accept a draw, I’ve got to win this game. I’ve got to prove that my position is better, so I’ve now got to sacrifice a piece.”*

Just remember that this is another insight into the mind of an experienced player, which may be a surprise to those who thought people only offered draws when losing.

Never Say Never

“Chess is mental torture.” – Garry Kasparov.

It is a thin line between playing hard for the win at all costs and slipping into a losing position. The attacking player is right to have a competitive attitude, but so often I have witnessed people trying to win level endings by reckless play, such as sacrificing a pawn, only to spend the rest of the game coping with a dour defensive struggle. There is a way to improve your results and that is by knowing when it is appropriate to carry on to the bitter end.

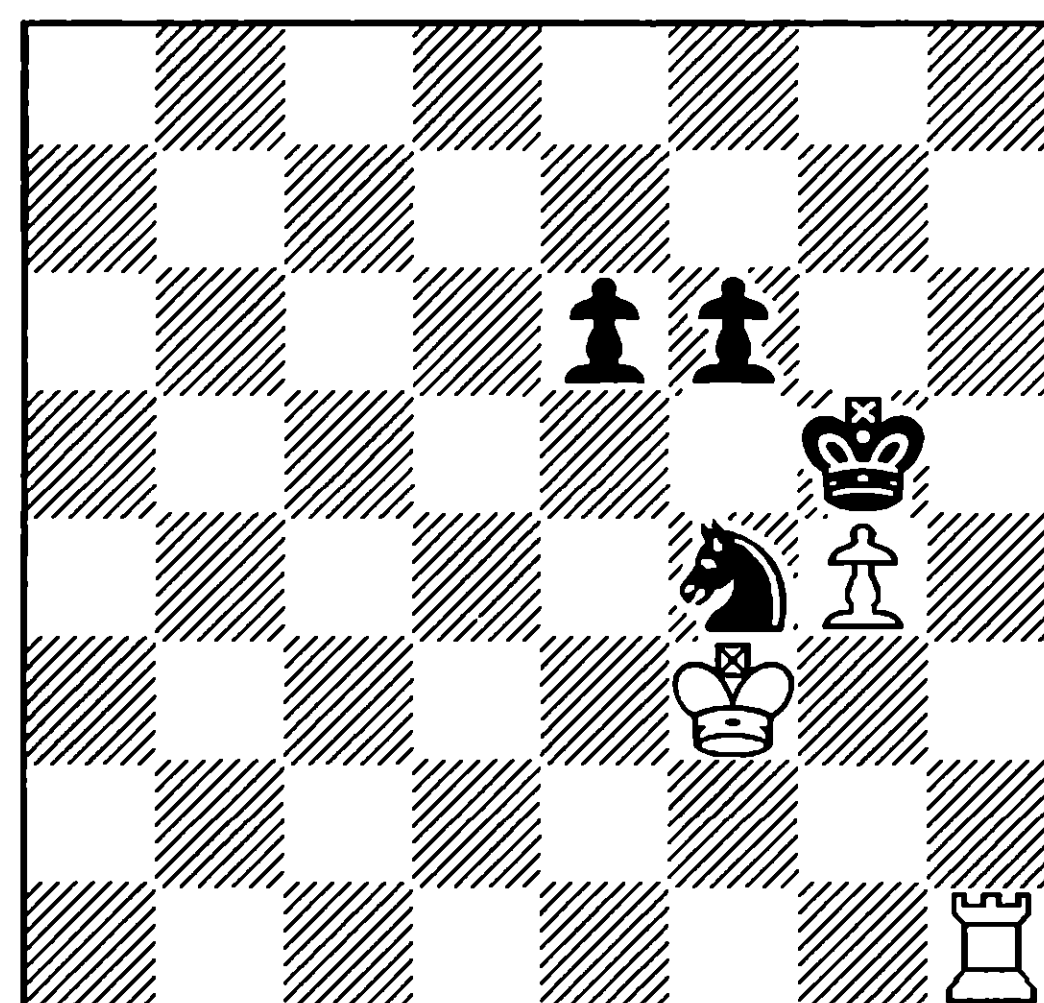
One example that always springs to my mind was when I was helping to coach the English team at the World Junior Championships. I was going over the game of the one of the girls and noticed she had agreed a draw against a higher-rated player, despite being a pawn up in the rook ending. I used a throwaway line “why not play on, because how can you lose?” and wrapped up proceedings by congratulating her on her overall performance.

A couple of rounds later she was up against the number one seed from Russia, and I was ready to give consoling words of encouragement, but to everyone’s astonishment and joy she won. Once again she had a rook ending with an extra pawn, but this time she turned the draw offer down as, she said, my words “why not play on, be-

cause how can you lose?” were echoing in her head. Sure enough, the young Russian could not cope with the demands of constantly defending and soon buckled under the strain. By chance I became the wise and knowledgeable coach in her eyes, and the lesson has even helped me on a number of occasions.

In particular, I once had a rook and knight against a rook and some pawns, which has to be a draw. Nevertheless, I couldn’t lose, so I racked my memory for any possible chances. As it happened, I had written a couple of puzzles books some years previously and one of the positions stuck in my mind:

L.Vogt-H.Wirthensohn Swiss Team Championship 2003



Black to play

61...♘g6??

A complete disaster for Black. 61...f5

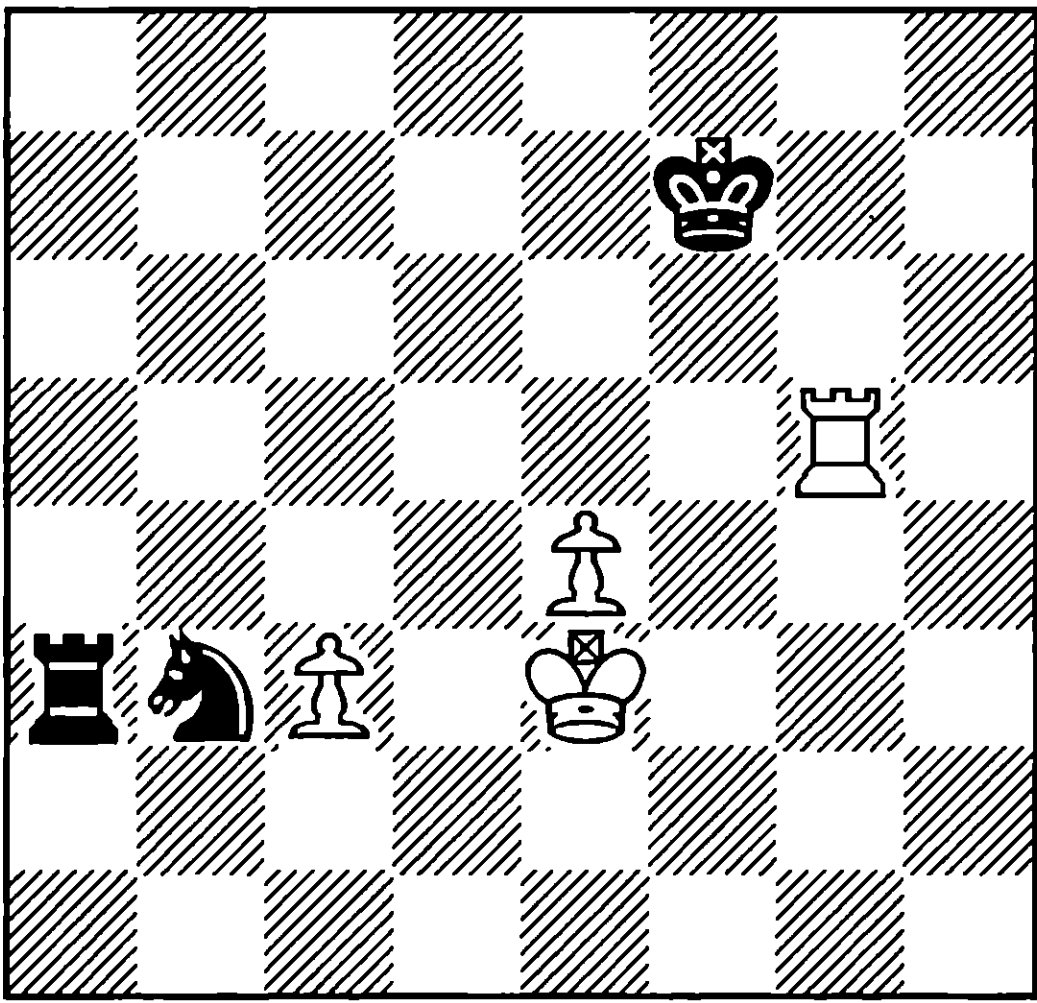
would probably have resulted in a draw being instantly agreed.

62 ♖h5 mate

I had this in my mind when I reached the following position:

E.Levi-G.Lane

Australian Championship,
Cammeray 2010



White to play

52 ♖b5

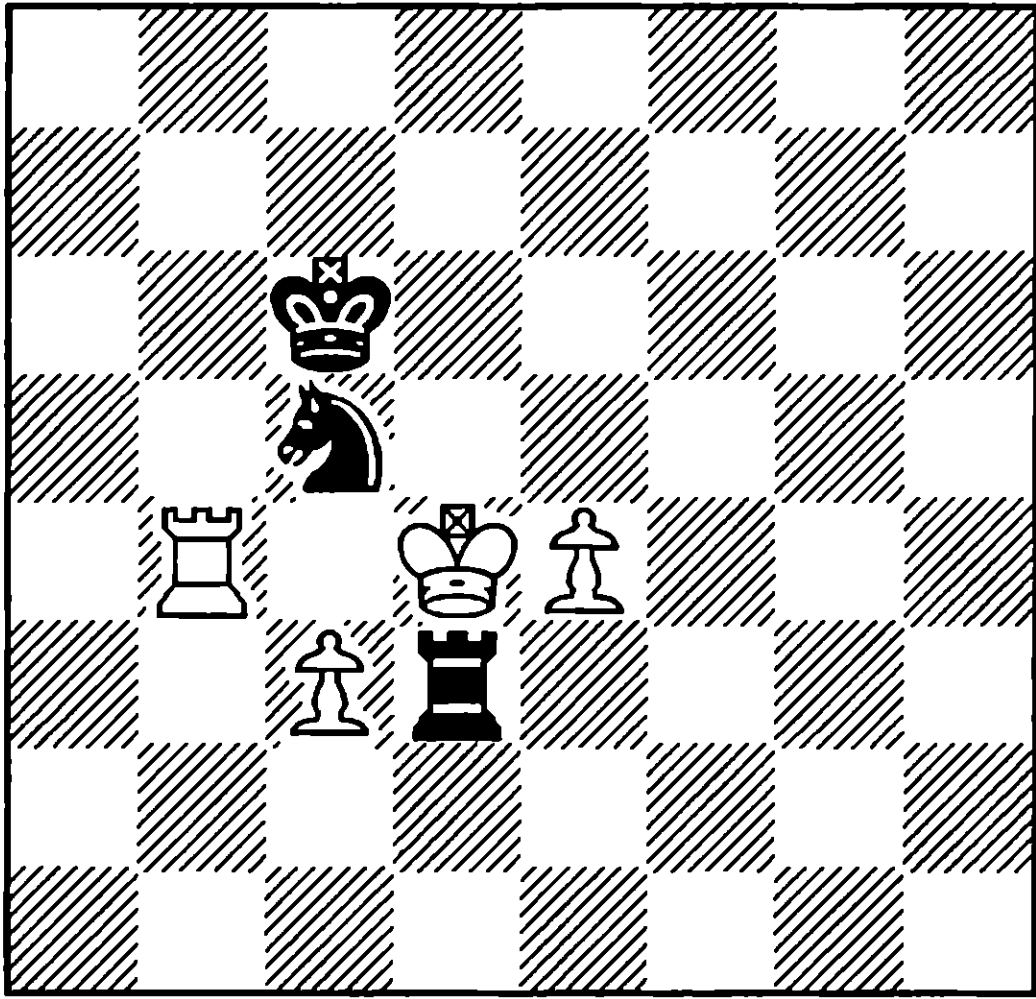
My opponent, an experienced tournament player, now offered me a draw which I was tempted to take. Yes, I could dream of a finish as in the Vogt-Wirthensohn game, but more likely it would end up as rook and knight vs. rook which is a fairly straightforward draw. Still, how could I lose? Such an ending would offer me a chance to torture my opponent in a risk-free environment. Now add in the vital component of my opponent's time-trouble

and it makes even more sense to carry on, because he has to move fast, while I have nothing to lose.

52...♔e6 53 ♖b6+ ♔d7 54 ♖h6 ♖a4 55 ♖b6 ♘c5 56 ♖b4 ♖a3 57 ♔d4 ♘e6+ 58 ♔c4 ♖a1 59 ♖b5 ♖e1 60 ♔d3

White is keen to hold on to the pawns, but even if he gave them all away it would still be a draw. At this stage a small group of spectators had gathered, as it was the last game being played in the tournament. This added extra pressure on my opponent, who knew everyone expected a draw, but with the clock ticking White was in two minds as to what to do.

60...♔c6 61 ♖b4 ♘c5+ 62 ♔d2 ♖h1 63 ♔e3 ♖h3+ 64 ♔d4 ♖d3+



65 ♔c4??

White is still obsessed with defending his pawns and gets into a right mess. Instead 65 ♔e5 ♖xc3 should lead to a draw.

65...♖e3 0-1

White has walked into a mating net and has no good defence against 65...♖xe4 mate.

You tend to be lucky in chess when you have patience.

Openings on the Internet

I think it is a good idea to practice your openings with friends, in rapid games, and especially on the internet. On the internet, blitz games are a great way of testing your ideas, and if you are going to fall into opening traps, this is the best place to do it because the games don't really matter.

Even the strongest players test the openings online; for instance, Magnus Carlsen is known (or at least rumoured) to test his openings online first before playing them at tournament level.

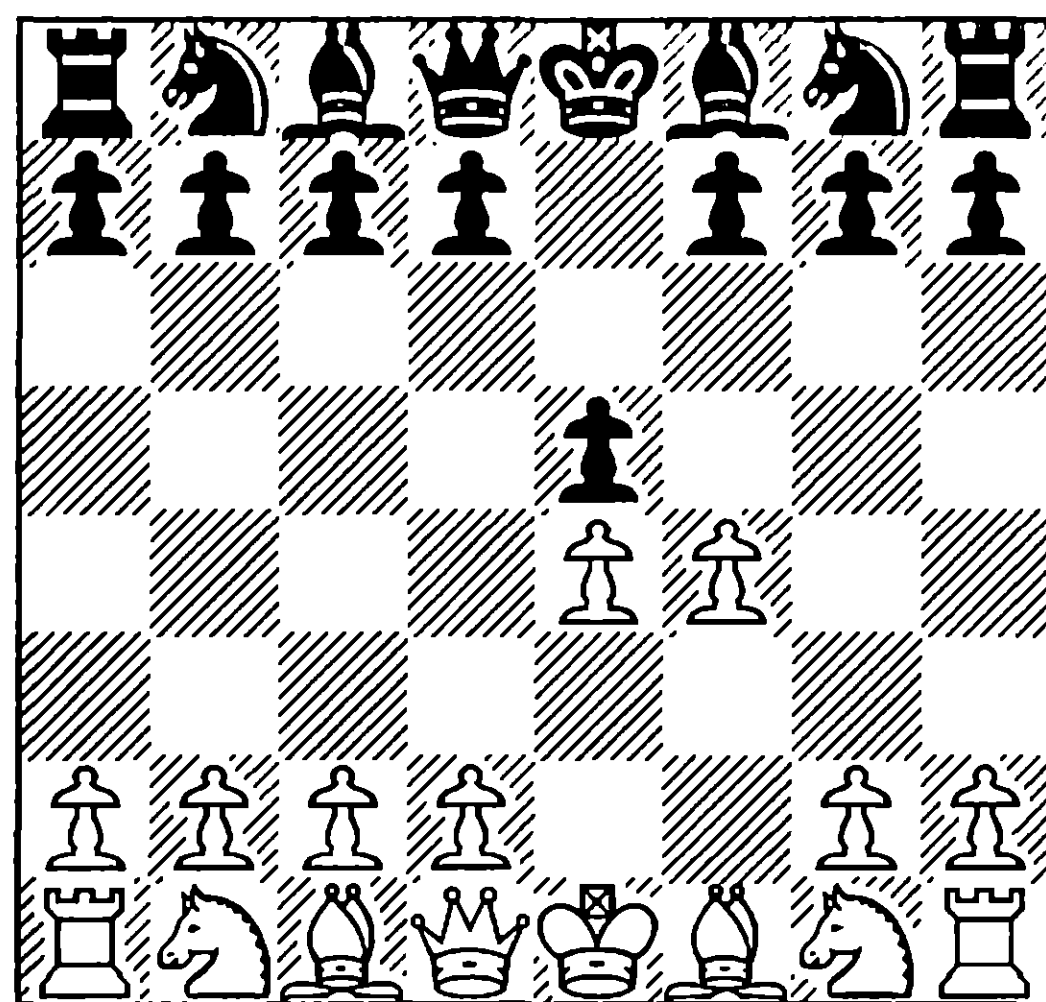
"Things weren't going so well in the tournament; I thought I just try it and see how it goes." – Magnus Carlsen, after surprising everyone by playing the King's Gambit.

Game 49 M.Carlsen-Wang Yue Medias 2010 King's Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 f4

This has to be the most beloved gambit, with people still trying to justify the pawn sacrifice. It is seldom played at the highest level nowadays, though this might change after Carlsen's dramatic adoption of the opening, even if that was partly a ploy to

avoid Wang Yue's ultra-solid Petroff Defence which occurs after 2 ♘f3 ♙f6.



The basic idea is to offer the pawn in return for a strong centre and a potential semi-open f-file for White's rook after castling kingside. The King's Gambit was particularly popular in the nineteenth century when everyone liked to attack but few knew how to defend. The most telling statistic is that the *Chessplayer's Manual* published in 1888 had a whopping 265 pages of variations, but still could not decide if the pawn sacrifice was worthwhile.

2...d5

The gambit is declined, albeit only temporarily. In the past on the other side of the gambit, Carlsen has preferred 2...exf4, as in A.Fedorov-M.Carlsen, Dubai 2004. Play proceeded 3 ♘f3 ♗g5, which partly supports my view that you can only refute a gambit by accepting it.

3 exd5

3 fxe5?? is the stuff of dreams and often happens in junior games: 3...♔h4+ is a killer move, since 4 g3

♖xc4 5 ♖c2 ♖xh1 wins a rook (with no chance of the queen being trapped), while after 4 ♔e2 ♕xe4+ 5 ♔f2 ♙c5+ White is in big trouble.

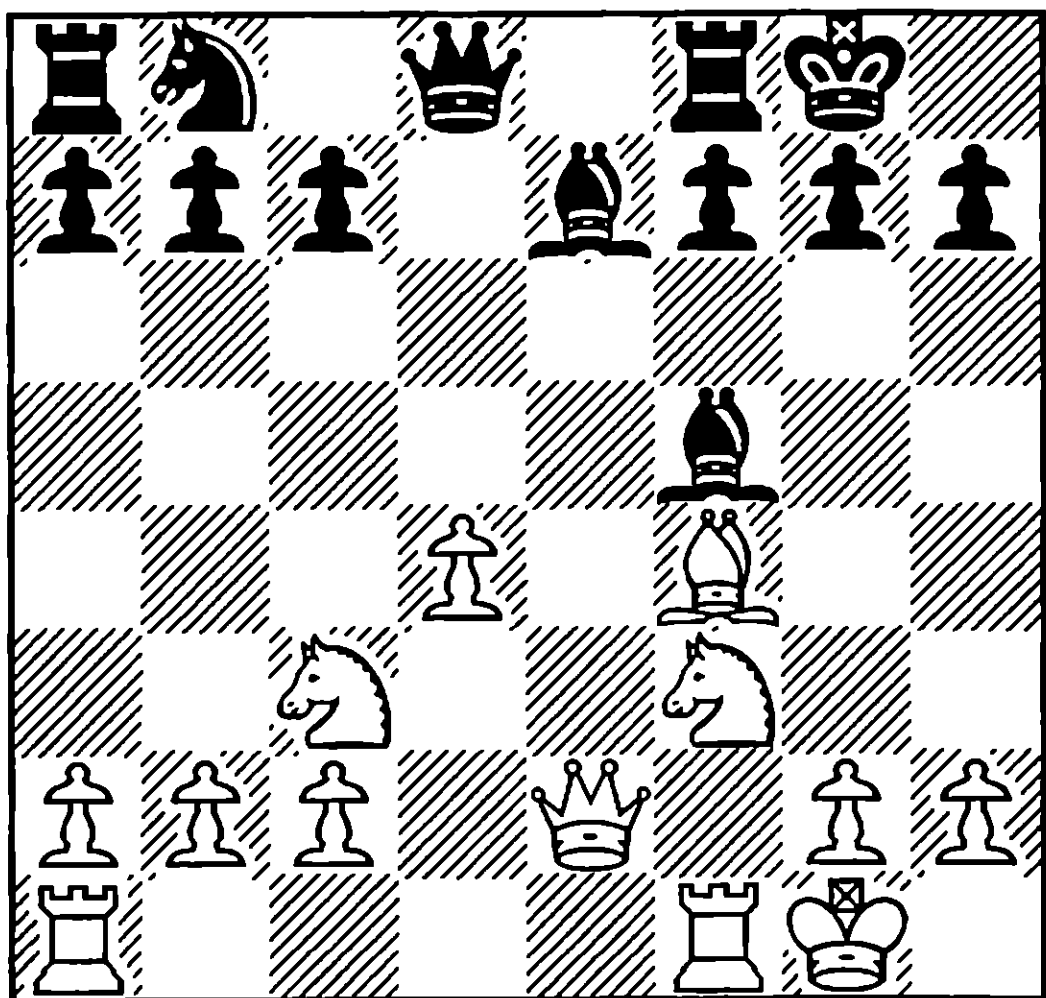
3...exf4 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♙c4

If 5 c4 trying to hold on to the pawn, then the gambit continuation 5...c6 is a good reply.

5...♘xd5 6 0-0 ♙e7 7 ♙xd5

White is quick to remove the defender of the f4-pawn.

7...♕xd5 8 ♘c3 ♕d8 9 d4 0-0 10 ♙xf4 ♙f5 11 ♕e2



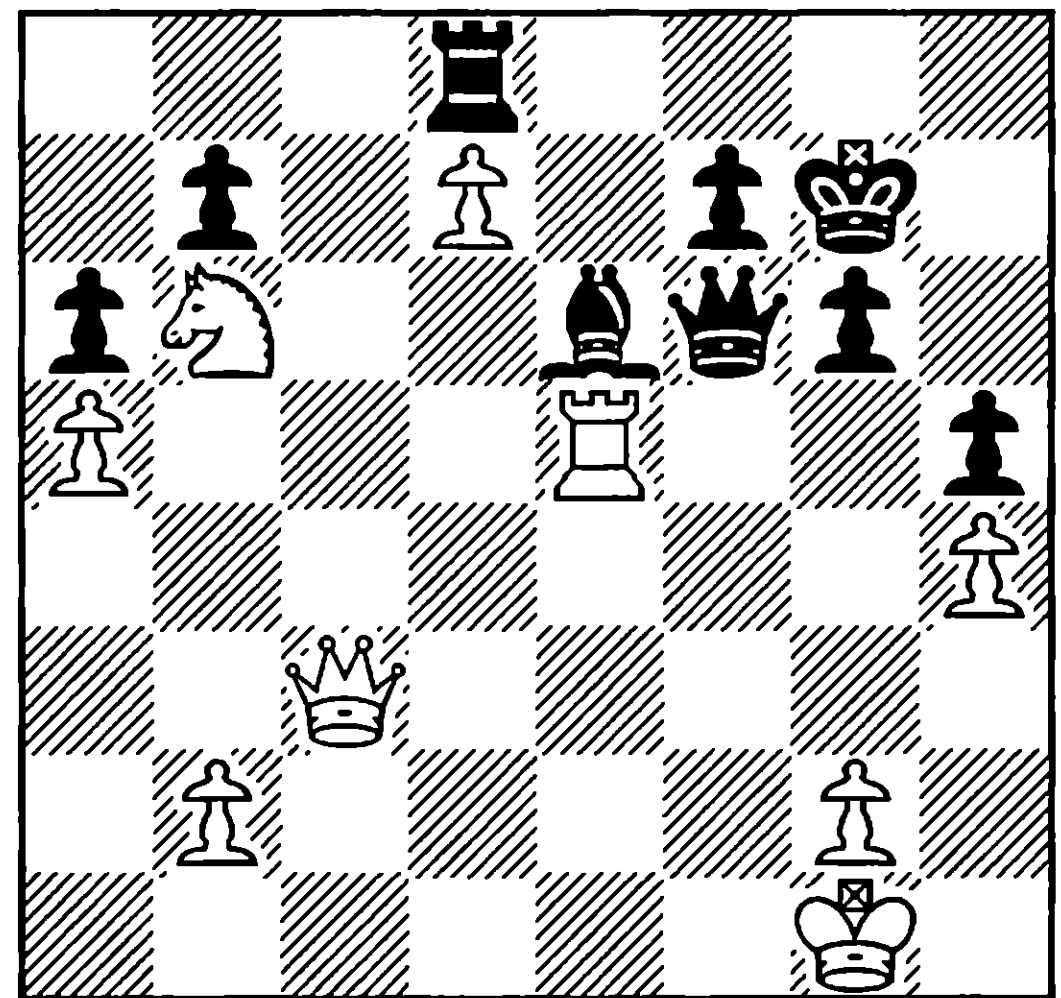
The position is roughly equal. White has more influence in the centre, but Black should be able to hold his own with the help of his pair of bishops. Nevertheless, Carlsen eventually emerged as the winner:

11...♙d6 12 ♙xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♘b5 ♕d8 14 c4 a6 15 ♘c3 ♘d7 16 ♖ad1 ♙g6 17 ♕f2 ♖e8 18 h3 ♖c8 19 ♖fe1 ♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1 c6 21 d5 ♘f6 22 ♕d4 cxd5 23 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 24 cxd5 ♕d6 25 ♘e5 ♖e8?!

This gives White time to break the blockade. Instead, the forcing 25...f6! 26 ♘xg6 (not 26 ♘c4? ♕b4! 27 ♖c1 b5 and

wins) 26...hxg6 would have maintained equality.

26 ♖e3 ♖d8 27 ♘c4 ♕f6 28 ♖e5 h6 29 d6 ♙f5 30 ♘b6 ♙e6 31 d7 ♔h8 32 a4 g6 33 ♕c3 ♔g7 34 a5 h5 35 h4



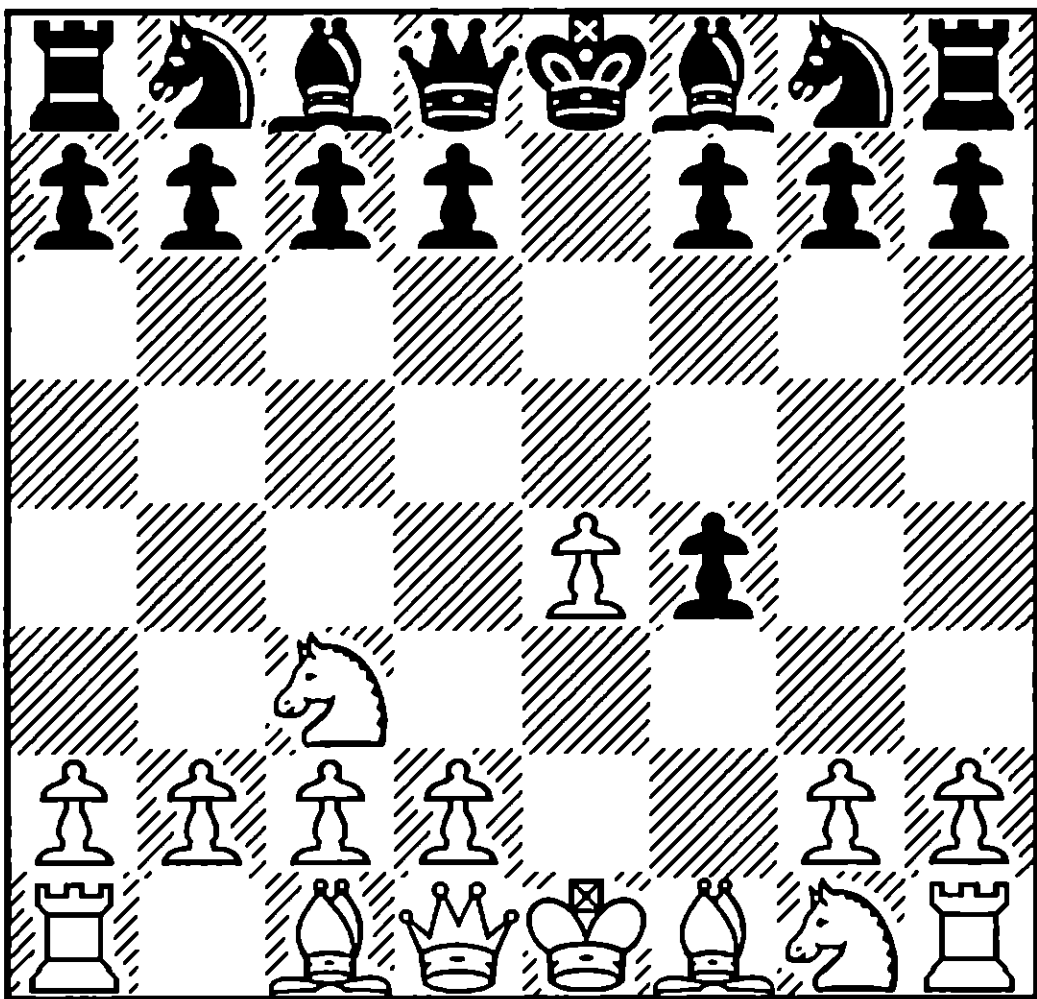
White is in complete control of the position. Black tries to free himself by sacrificing the exchange, but he still doesn't manage to hold on.

35...♖xd7 36 ♘xd7 ♙xd7 37 ♕d4 ♙c6 38 b4 ♙b5 39 ♔h2 ♙a4 40 ♖d5 ♙c6 41 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 42 ♖c5 ♔e6 43 ♔g3 f6 44 ♔f2 ♙d5 45 g3 g5 46 g4 hxg4 47 h5 ♙e4 48 ♖c7 f5 49 h6 f4 50 h7 g3+ 51 ♔e1 f3 52 h8♕ f2+ 53 ♔e2 ♙d3+ 54 ♔e3 1-0

Here is another game where White is inspired to take a chance with 2 f4, and then 2...exf4 3 ♘c3!?. This sort of wacky opening variation is ideal for rapid play or the internet, where an initiative or a big time advantage can make all the difference. I hesitate to recommend them, however, if your opponent has plenty of time to work out a defence:

Game 50
U.Egli-A.Raetsky
 Zürich 1998
King's Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♖c3!?



This variation has a history stretching back centuries and in that time it has been known by various names, such as the Keres Gambit, Mason Gambit, Parnu Gambit, and the Requena Gambit – and by some as “White blunders”, because it really does test credulity by offering Black the chance to force the white king to advance after only four moves. Of course 3 ♘f3 is the main alternative, although 3 ♔c4 is also popular, since 3...♔h4+ 4 ♔f1 is a much improved version of the main game.

3...♔h4+

The justification for White's unusual third move would be complete if Black responded with 3...g5, because then 4 h4! undermines the pawn chain straight away (unlike 3 ♘f3 g5 4 h4

there is no knight on f3 to attack with 4...g4), and after 4...gxh4 5 d4 White already has a very promising position.

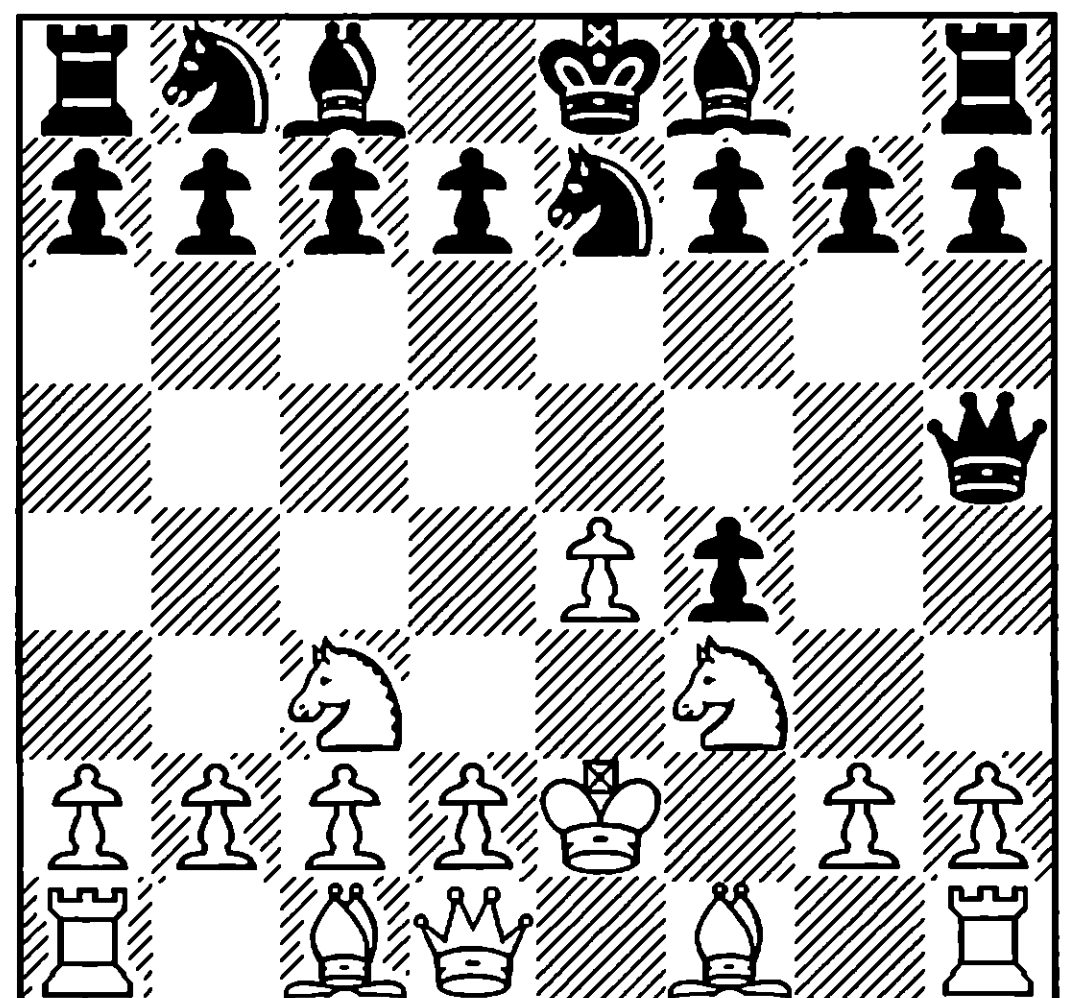
4 ♕e2

Yes, it looks crazy, but this has dipped in and out of fashion in recent decades. I just think it is one of those openings that is great fun for rapid games, though White has to be in the mood for the ultimate challenge of making such an opening work to his advantage. In quick chess it is still possible to see players falling for the old ruse 4 g3? fxg3 5 ♘f3 and now 5...g2+ floors them because 6 ♘xh4 gxh1♔ is an absolute winner.

4...♘e7

A sensible approach, developing a piece while making sure that ♘c3-d5 is not a threat (as the knight can just be exchanged). Instead, 4...d5 is more well known, when 5 ♘xd5 ♔g4+ 6 ♘f3 ♔d6 7 d4 or 6...♘c6!? 7 ♘xc7+ ♔d8 8 ♘xa8 leads to fantastic complications.

5 ♘f3 ♔h5



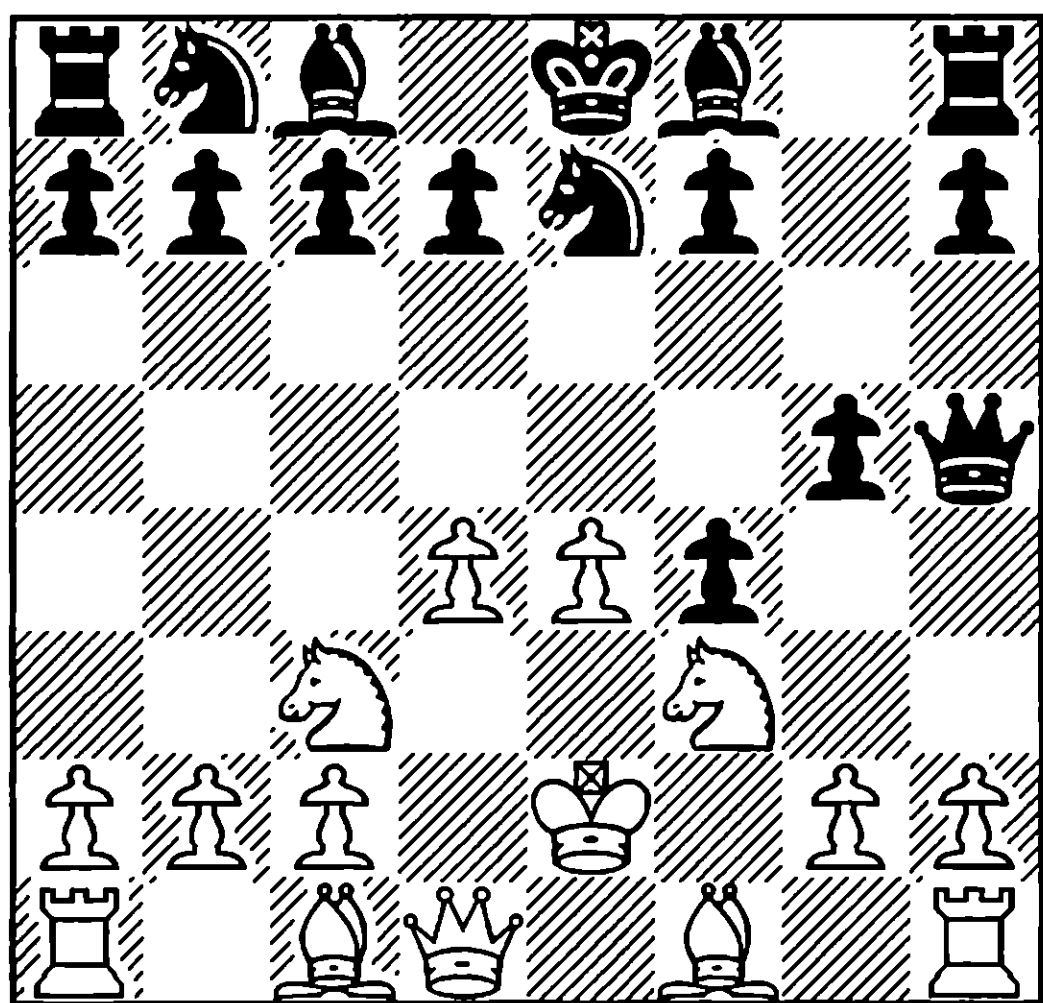
The pin on the white knight is a way of ensuring that it is not easy for Egli to

unravel his pieces. Black just needs to make sure he always has an escape square for the queen to avoid a calamity.

6 d4

If White is looking for an improvement then I would suggest getting the king out of the way with 6 ♔f2. It might not be perfect but if Black plays casually then White can soon get back into the action with ♙c4, d2-d4 and ♖f1. For example: 6...d6 7 d4 g5!? 8 ♙c4 ♙g7 9 h4! when Black has some work to do.

6...g5



7 g4?!

Now I am all for preparing to attack, but you need to be patient because an onslaught requires reinforcements in the shape of active pieces, and at the moment White is badly co-ordinated, principally because there is a king looking rather strange on the e2-square. Once again I think White should concentrate on giving the king a safer berth, so 7 ♔f2 should be considered.

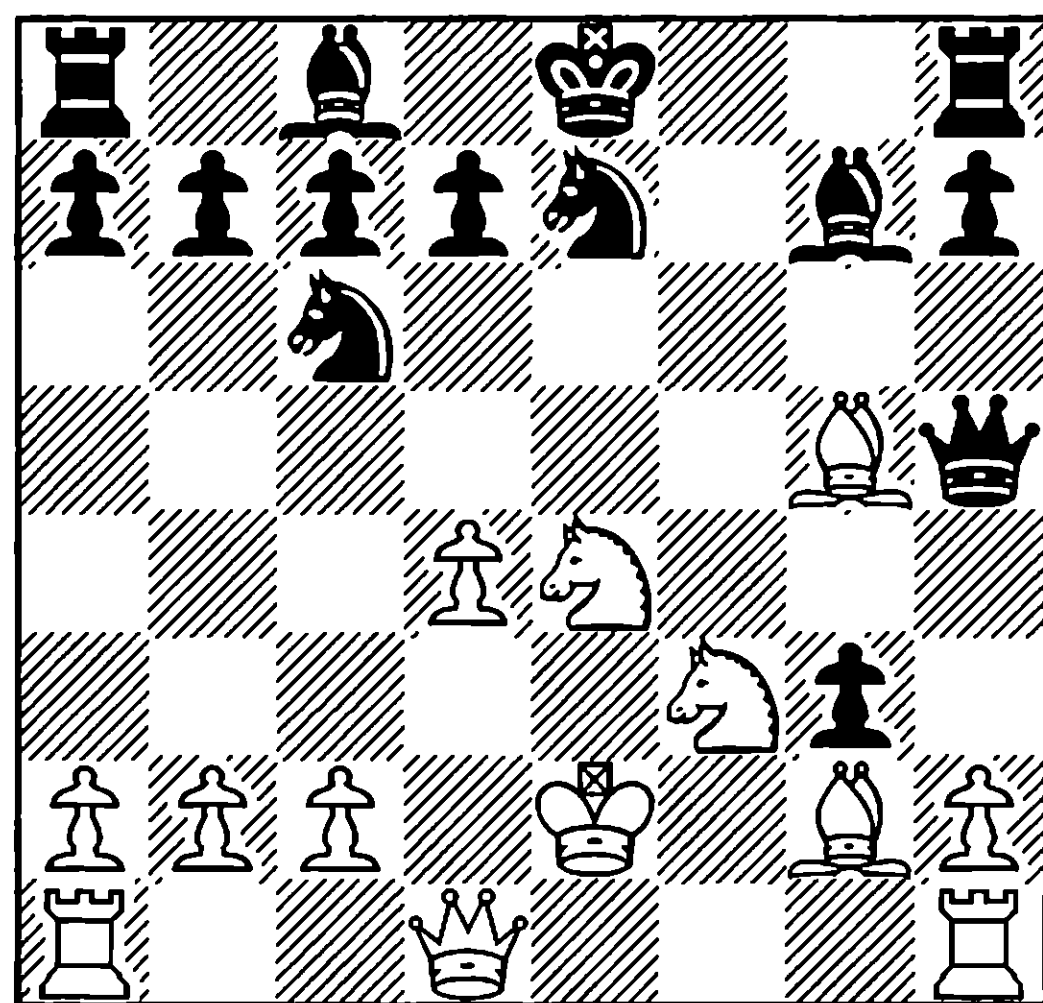
7...fxg3 8 ♙g2 f6

If anything Black is playing it safe by protecting the g-pawn and providing the queen with sanctuary (if so required) on the f7-square. The critical test has to be 8...g4!, when 9 ♘e5 gxh2 10 ♙f4 g3+ 11 ♔e3 is the sort of wild position that a King's Gambit player revels in, although the precise continuation 11...♙xd1 12 ♖axd1 d6 13 ♘f3 ♖g8 tips the scales in Black's favour.

9 e5!? ♙g7 10 exf6 ♙xf6 11 ♘e4

White is to be admired for attacking at every opportunity, but I would prefer 11 hxg3, and if 11...♙g6 then 12 ♙d3!, since the exchange of queens will make it easier to regain the pawn.

11...♙g7 12 ♙xg5 ♘bc6



13 d5?

Oops! A problem with sharp openings is that one mistake can snuff out your initiative. Again 13 hxg3 was more sensible, when 13...♙f7 (13...♙g4 14 ♖h4! ♙e6 15 ♔d2 or 13...♙g6 14 ♘h4! ♙e6 15 ♔d2 is better for White) 14 ♔d2 d5 15 ♘c5 ♙g4 16 c3 0-0-0 would be roughly equal.

13...♗d4+?!

The Russian senses a comfortable, risk-free position. Objectively, 13...♔g4! is probably superior, as after 14 ♖xg3 h6 15 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 White's attack fades away, leaving Black with the brighter prospects.

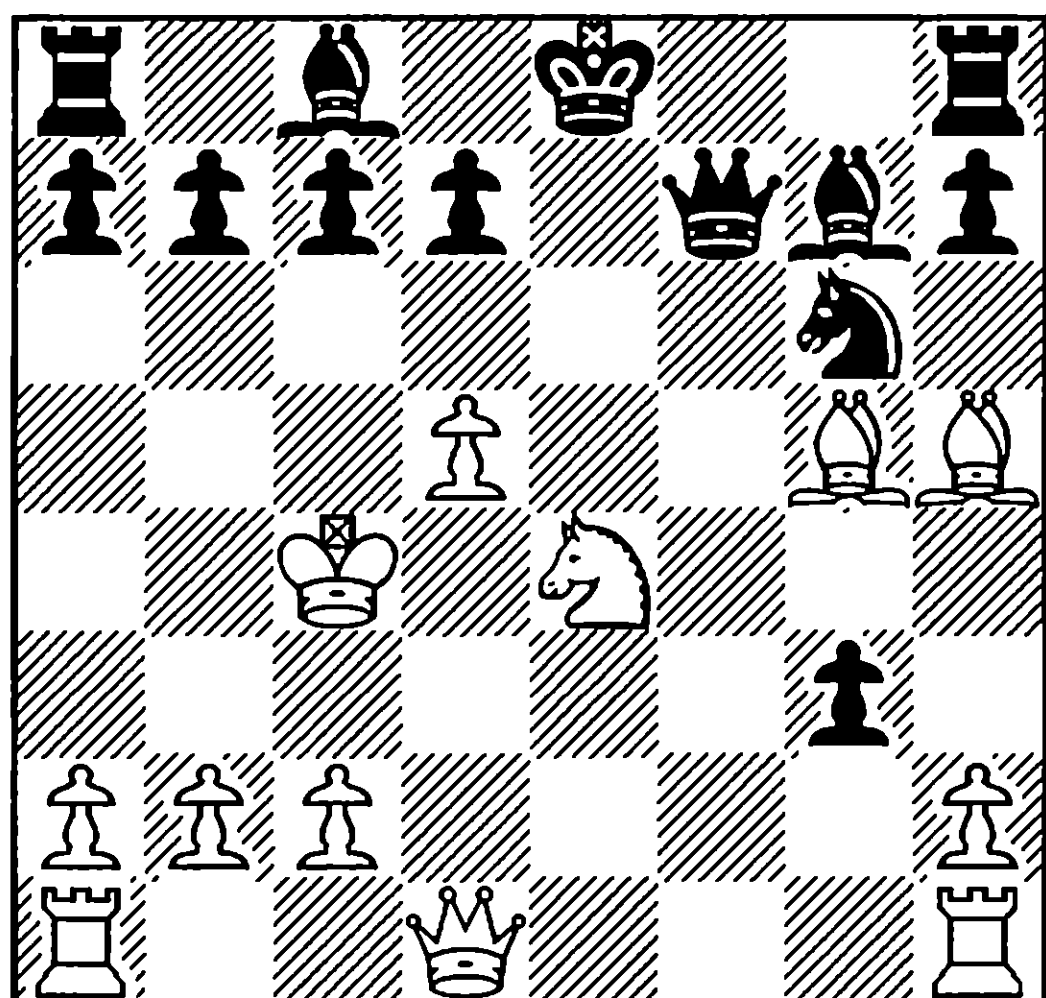
14 ♔d3

14 ♔d2! seems to be a better reply.

14...♖xf3 15 ♕xf3?!

Or here 15 ♔xf3! ♔xf3+ 16 ♕xf3 0-0 17 ♖af1 ♖xd5 18 ♖xg3 ♖b4+ 19 ♔d2, when the influence of the active white pieces offers sufficient compensation.

15...♔f7 16 ♕h5 ♖g6 17 ♔c4?



One has to admire the spirit of White, who is doing everything possible to appear in a book of spectacular miniatures.

17...b5+! 18 ♔b3

Strangely, I think that by now White has to go for it with 18 ♔xb5, just so that after 18...♖b8+ 19 ♔a4 Black can play 19...0-0 and start smirking.

18...g2!

A nice little positional move, ensuring that Black can castle kingside under

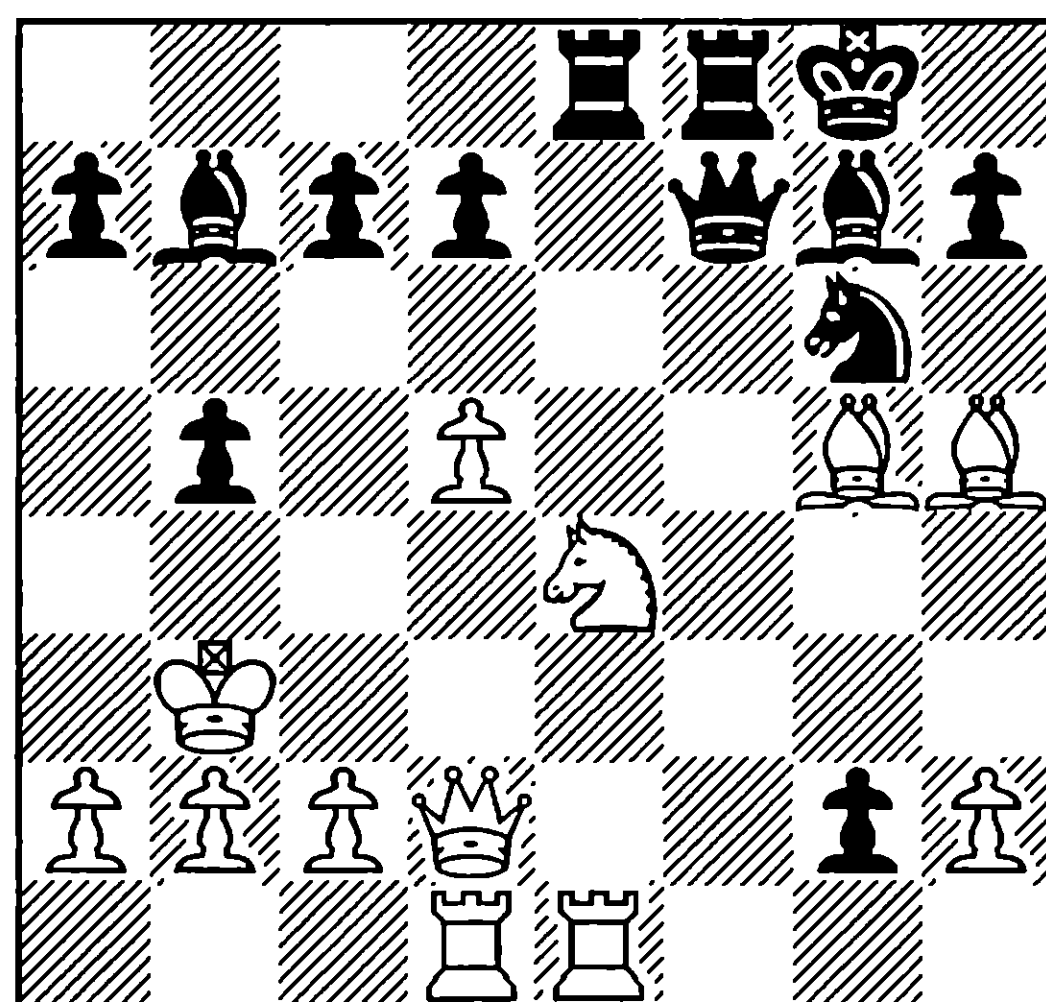
favourable circumstances.

19 ♖e1 0-0

Raetsky is only a pawn up, but has a big advantage because the desperate king on b3 hampers White from doing anything constructive.

20 ♔d2 ♕b7 21 ♖ad1 ♖ae8

Now that Black has activated the rest of the queenside pieces, White cannot withstand all the tactical tricks since there are just too many defensive duties required.



22 c4 bxc4+ 23 ♔xc4 g1 ♔ 0-1

One possible finish is 24 ♖xg1 ♖xe4+ 25 ♔b3 ♕xd5+ 26 ♔xd5 ♖b8+ 27 ♔c2 (or 27 ♔a3 ♕xb2 mate) 27...♖xb2+ 28 ♔c1 ♖c4+ and mate next move.

An opening so wild it is perfect for the internet.

No time to learn

"It depends. Many days I spend quite a few hours. But other times I don't even look at the board." – Bobby Fischer, speaking to Román Torán at the 1960 Olympiad.



How many hours should you study? This is one of the biggest problems in moving up to the next level, but I think you can use your time wisely. A keen junior might be able to devote (far too) many hours to his favourite hobby, but the majority of us have a life, which means we have to be clever with our time.

At the most basic level, I really do think it can only be a good thing to glance at the chess puzzle in the newspaper every day, because this at least reinforces certain combinational patterns (though my tip is always to look for a queen sacrifice) and every little bit helps.

Another good idea is to play on the internet. There are plenty of free sites on which to play people of your own standard or, even better, slightly stronger for more of a challenge. If you have a nearby chess club or a social circle of friends who love blitz chess, even better, but the internet offers instant games right around the clock. You should also be able to download your games on to your computer, so you can see how your opening or general play is progressing.

Anyone would rubbish a footballer who thinks he can perform to a high standard despite not playing for six months, leaving him without match practice. Yet, a lot of chess players do exactly the same thing and then wonder why they spend longer over each move and keep on losing.

"I don't study; I create." Viktor Korchnoi.

Chess would be a lot easier if we could just make it up as we go along and still score well, but even a legend like Korchnoi keeps aware of the latest openings. The rest of us might not have time to analyse at length the finer points of the Sicilian Dragon or the Semi-Slav up to move 20 and beyond, but we can adopt other openings that are comparatively low maintenance. For example, the Colle (1 d4 d5 2 f3 and 3 e3, intending d3 and castles) is the type of solid opening which is very unlikely to have a complicated variation busted by a new move in Moscow. One can also try anti-Sicilian options, such as the Closed or c3 Sicilians, to save time on having to study the heavily theoretical Open main lines.

I would recommend going through lots of games to find out which openings suit your attacking style. Computer databases are great for seeing what to do in the opening, but if you have 20,000 Ruy Lopez games, which ones are best? My advice is to invest in a book or DVD on your favourite opening, because these are likely to give you ideas behind the opening and also point out all those cunning tricks and traps.

This applies to high-level players as well, although they often won't admit to receiving too much outside help. At the 2002 Olympiad I was surprised to

see a top grandmaster carrying around a copy of my book on the Grand Prix Attack (1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 and then 3 f4) and tentatively asked why he had just bought it. He said he didn't know much about the opening and wanted to know more. Realistically, why spend hours ploughing through games on the database when someone else can do it for you?

Of course, databases are great for examining the latest games and updating your books, but first of all learn the background to an opening, so that you can, for instance, find out why certain lines are no longer played and discover the move-order tricks and various traps.

The bad news is time flies when you study chess; the good news is that you're the pilot.

Resignation – not the best move

It is often the case that when a player is nearing victory he tends to get careless, already mentally assuming he has won. That is the time when things can go badly wrong, so the defender should always keep looking for a way out.

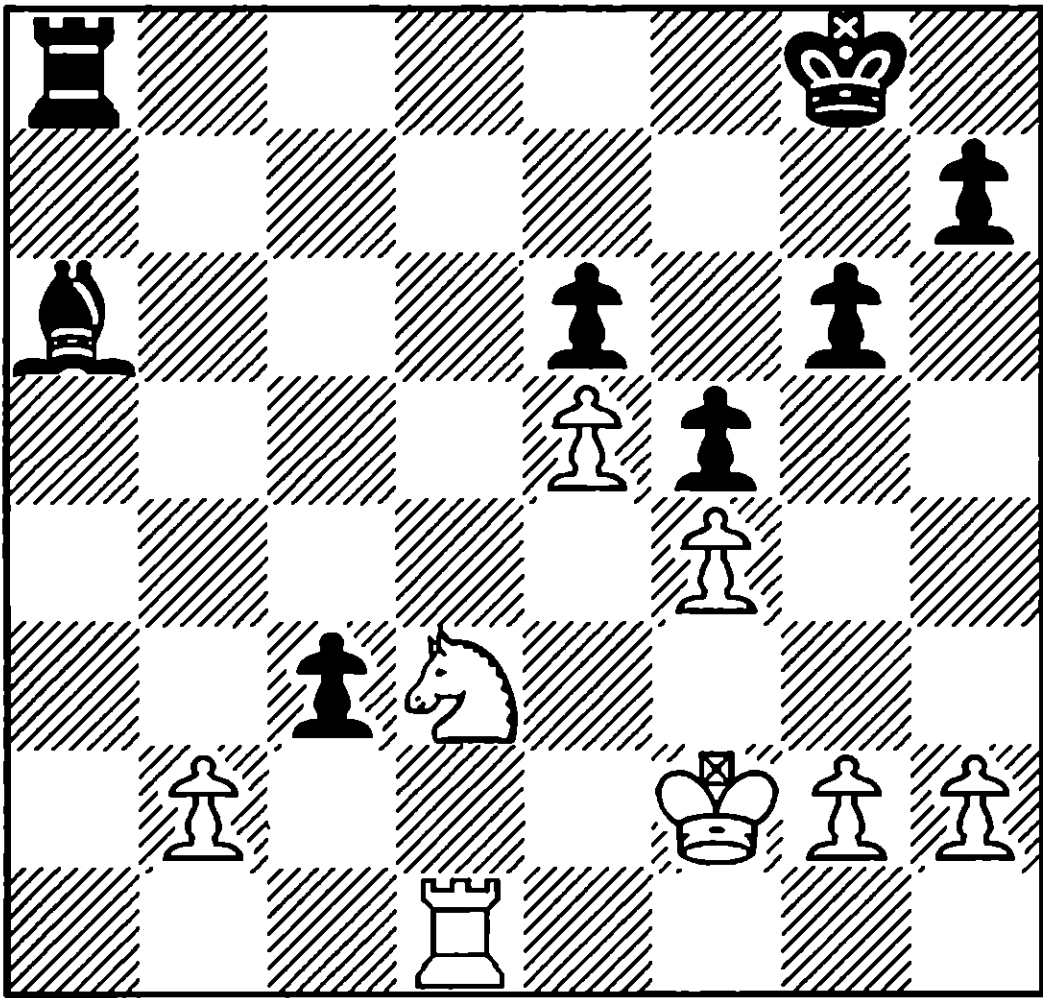
I remember playing in the Glorney Cup, which is an international team event for the under-eighteens. One player was so upset about his losing position that he wrote 1-0 in advance on his scoresheet while still recording the moves. At this stage he blundered his queen and looked even more morose and folded his scoresheet in half.

However, he brightened up considerably when the queen had been taken, crossing out the expected result and neatly wrote each move of his mating combination. That might not be exactly ethical, but it's more evidence that you should think for five minutes just before you are about to win.

I learned that idea from someone who won numerous first prizes at weekend tournaments, before graduating to victories at international tournaments. The policy works because then you don't fall for last minute tricks, and if the position really is that bad your opponent tends to get embarrassed by what is on the board and promptly resigns.

In the next game Black certainly did not think for five minutes before playing the winning move:

D.Rosen-D.Coleman
British League 2010



Black to play

33...c2? 0-1

It seems that those who resign should also take time out to have a think, because after 34 ♖a1 the position is equal – the knight cannot be taken due to 35 ♖xa8 check. Well, Black got away with it that time, but if had used the five minutes test he would have surely found the more exact

33...♙d8!, when 34 ♗e3 c2! really does force resignation.

Good luck to all those who are prepared to attack.

“A computer beat me in chess, but it was no match when it came to kickboxing.” – Comedian Emo Philips.

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PREPARE TO ATTACK

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." Abraham Lincoln

There's no escaping the fact: if you want to win chess games, you have to attack at some point. Many players are happy solving combinations in winning positions, when the hard work is already done, but the key to a successful attack undoubtedly comes much earlier. No-one can attack effectively if they haven't prepared properly, and yet planning in chess can be a difficult technique to master, even for experienced players.

This book provides a solution. Using an abundance of illustrative games and examples, Gary Lane answers the questions which constantly puzzle players of all levels. Where are my opponent's weaknesses?

Do I have enough pieces in the attack? When should I strike?

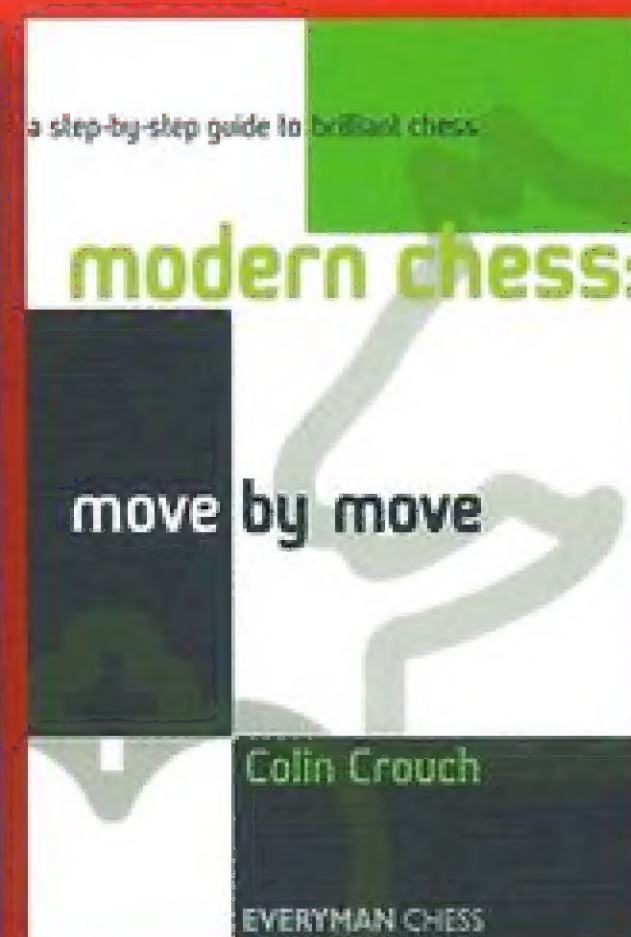
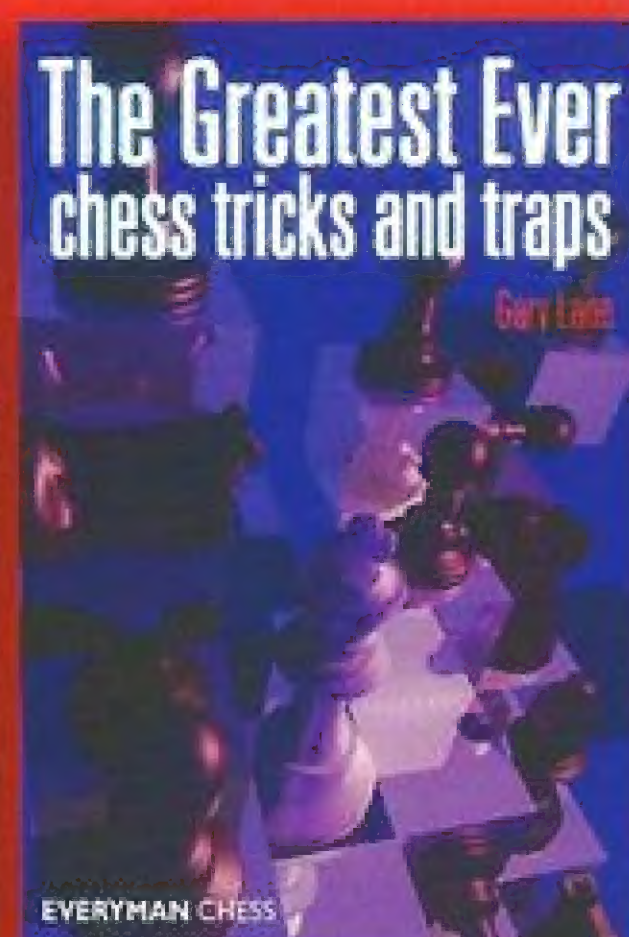
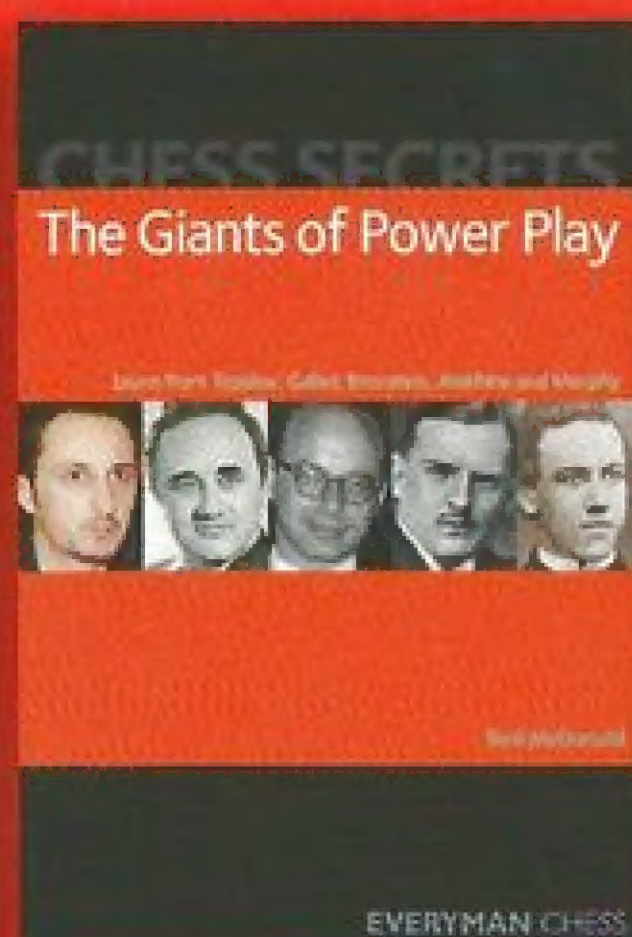
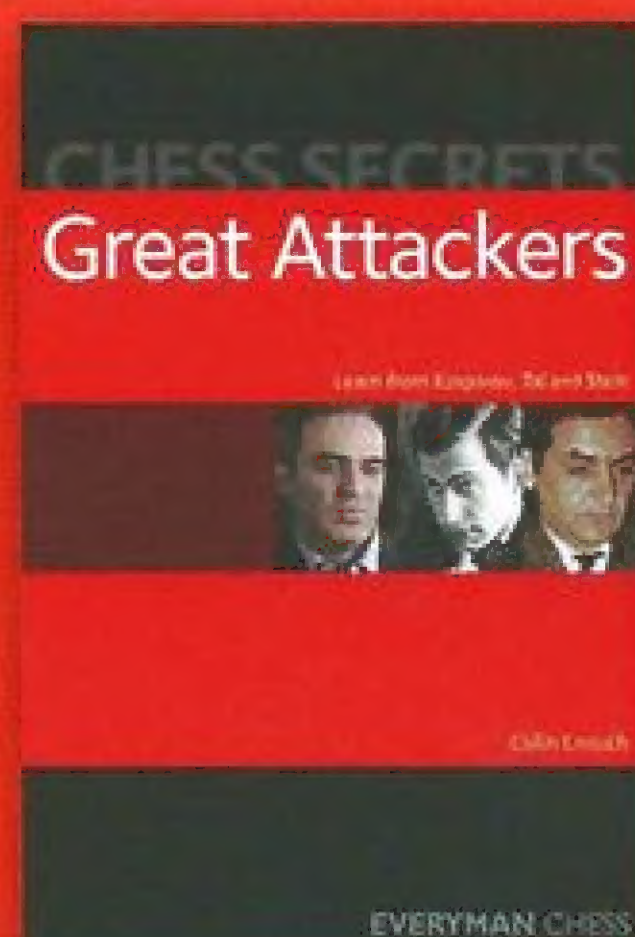
Do I need to sacrifice? Should I cash in or continue to attack?

Read this book, discover the answers and attack with confidence!

- An essential guide to attacking chess
- Introduces easy-to-learn techniques
- Focuses on planning and strategy

Gary Lane is an International Master, a former Commonwealth Champion, and has represented Australia in three Chess Olympiads. He's a popular writer and also an experienced trainer.

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